

House Democrats move to aid contra terrorists

The plan put together by Democratic Party leaders in the U.S. House of Representatives to fund the contra war calls for spending some \$30 million to maintain and reinforce the Nicaraguan terrorists.

Emergency actions are urgently needed to protest this and any other proposal to fund the contras.

This \$30 million plan was hammered out by "a task force of 15 House Democrats,

EDITORIAL

representing liberal, moderate, and conservative wings of the party," the February 21 *New York Times* reported.

It comes three weeks after the House rejected Reagan's contra aid package.

The measure officially provides \$16 million directly to the contras, including \$3.6 million per month in supplies for the next four months.

Another \$360,000 per month will be provided to try to sustain operations by the terrorists among Miskito Indians and others in Nicaragua's Atlantic Coast region. This is intended to counter the growing number of armed Miskito groups that have signed cease-fires with the Nicaragua.

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Antiwar protest in Washington, D.C.

Militant/Susie Winsten

Shultz tour aims to bolster Israel

BY HARRY RING

The visit to Israel by Secretary of State George Shultz is designed to help the Israeli government defeat the uprising of the Palestinian people.

Posing as a "peace" negotiator, Shultz hopes to line up neighboring Arab governments to help impose a "solution" that will address none of the basic problems that gave rise to the rebellion.

The Palestine Liberation Organization was reported as branding the Shultz visit a conspiracy with the Israeli oppressors of the Palestinian people.

A clandestine leaflet called for a week of protest by Palestinians — including a two-day general strike — to express "national outrage at the Shultz visit."

The terms of the Washington proposi-

tion have not been publicly stated.

They are reported to include an offer of limited self-government for the people of the Gaza Strip and West Bank. This would be within the framework of continuing Israeli military rule of these two areas of Palestine.

To obscure this, the Shultz package would include the idea that at some future, unspecified date, Israel would give up Gaza and the West Bank.

Also reported proposed is the convening of an undefined international parley to begin negotiating the future of the Palestinian people. There is no mention of including the PLO in the negotiations — the organization leading the national liberation struggle of the Palestinian people. Instead, Washington speaks of unspecified Pales-

tinians being incorporated into a Jordanian delegation.

Thus far, according to reports, the principal Arab governments, including those of Egypt and Jordan, have reacted coolly to Washington's proposition.

Meanwhile, the Israeli bloodletting continues.

As of February 21, at least 63 Palestinians had been killed. Hundreds have been wounded by gunfire, and several thousand have suffered brutal beatings.

Since the uprising began on December 9, at least 2,000 people have been arrested. How many of these remain behind bars has not been reported.

Confronted with a stubborn continuation of the Palestinian resistance, the atrocities committed by Israeli forces have, if any-

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Philippine army cracks down on peasants

BY RUSSELL JOHNSON

MANILA, Philippines — During January, Philippine Defense Secretary Rafael Ileto resigned his post. He was immediately replaced by retiring army chief of staff Gen. Fidel Ramos, who has increasingly emerged as the military strongman in the government of President Corazon Aquino.

In resigning, Ileto complained that it was Ramos' policies, not his, that were being implemented by the military and the government in their bid to crush the 20-year-old peasant insurgency led by the New People's Army (NPA).

Ileto advocates reorganizing the Philippine army around the goal of militarily defeating the NPA. In contrast, Ramos insists the focus must also be on "neutralizing" the mass worker and peasant organizations he called "NPA fronts."

For example, Ramos told the Philippine Senate February 18, "The Armed Forces of the Philippines have embarked on a program to hit not just the NPA, but to hit the NPA fronts."

Ramos is demanding reintroduction of the death penalty for rebellions and has called for the army to be granted the right to arrest and detain people without charges in those areas of the country they deem necessary.

The reality of what Ramos meant by "hitting the NPA fronts" was brought home to this reporter during four days in the sub-province of Aurora as a guest of the Task Force Detainees of the Philippines (TFDP).

TFDP, a church-based human rights group, organized a fact-finding mission to the province in February to investigate reports that hundreds of peasant families were fleeing a military terror campaign in the countryside north of the provincial capital of Baler.

Assassination, arson, detention

During its visit, TFDP was able to document illegal detentions, assassinations, arsons, and harassment by the armed forces against peasant, student, and church activists in Aurora.

The military had reported to the press
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French cop attack in New Caledonia

BY MIKE TUCKER

AUCKLAND, New Zealand — Kanak independence fighters clashed with French police on the Pacific island of New Caledonia February 22, following a land occupation near the town of Poindimie.

The protesters were demanding that the land be returned to native Kanak ownership, as the French colonizers had promised. The clash occurred when police tried to end the occupation.

Some 18 cops and one Kanak were injured during the fighting. Ten cops were taken hostage by the protesters and held overnight. Following negotiations with the French authorities, the hostages were released the next morning, and the land occupation ended.

Despite promises that there would be no arrests or reprisals until further negotiations were held, five local leaders of the Kanak Socialist National Liberation Front (FLNKS) in Poindimie were arrested February 24. The FLNKS had organized the land occupation.

New Caledonia is a French colony in

the South Pacific with a population of 150,000. Kanaks, numbering around 65,000, are the indigenous people of the country. They are demanding independence from France. The FLNKS is the organization leading the independence struggle.

For the past several years, New Caledonia has been under military occupation, with 8,000 French troops and paramilitary police stationed throughout the colony.

The February 22 occupation of the land at Poindimie followed a February 19-20 congress of the FLNKS attended by activists from throughout the country.

The congress voted to call on Kanaks and other supporters of the independence struggle to boycott upcoming local elections, as well as the French presidential elections to be held in May.

FLNKS President Jean-Marie Tjibaou called for a mobilization of the Kanak people to demonstrate resistance to French rule.

U.S. officials step up drive to oust Panama's government

BY SAM MANUEL

On February 17 Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs Elliott Abrams met in Miami with the president of Panama, Eric Arturo Delvalle. Abrams sought the aid of Delvalle to remove Panamanian Gen. Manuel Antonio Noriega.

According to several news reports, Abrams told Delvalle that the State Department would seek to get recent drug-trafficking indictments against Noriega dropped. In exchange the general and several of his top aides must agree to leave Panama.

This brazen attempt to change Panama's government is another step in Washington's campaign to destabilize the Panamanian regime. The effort has included cutting off all economic and military aid to Panama.

Noriega and 15 other individuals were indicted on February 5 by two federal grand juries in Miami. They are charged with conspiracy to smuggle massive

amounts of illegal drugs into the United States and with laundering profits from drugs sales through Panamanian banks.

According to a report in the February 18 *New York Newsday*, a source close to Delvalle said that following the meeting Abrams asked Delvalle to fly to Washington and telephone Noriega with the offer.

Under Abrams' plan, the source said, "if Noriega accepted, fine. If not, Delvalle would call an emergency meeting of the Organization of American States and declare Noriega in rebellion." But Delvalle turned down Abrams' offer.

The following day a State Department spokesperson denied that Abrams had offered a deal. He claimed that the meeting and proposed deal had been initiated by Delvalle. This was contradicted by a Justice Department spokesperson, John Russell, who said Abrams had notified department officials that "he would seek to have

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Airline workers in Miami like 'Militant' article

BY JEFF MILLER

MIAMI — Distributors of the *Militant* had a good week on plant-gate sales with a recent issue featuring an article on the crisis in

IAM members at Eastern sold the rest to their coworkers.

Normally we send three plant-gate teams a week to Eastern. They usually sell 5 to 10 papers.

SELLING OUR PRESS AT THE PLANT GATE

the airline industry.

Seventy-two members of the International Association of Machinists (IAM) at Eastern Airlines bought copies of the *Militant*. Four plant-gate teams sold 29 papers. *Militant* supporters who are

But this week the paper really got around. Someone xeroxed copies of the airlines article.

A ramp worker who already subscribes to the *Militant* got excited when he saw the xeroxes. "Let me have some of those. I'll

get some passed out and put them up on the bulletin boards. Maybe we can get this printed in some other newspapers too," he said.

Ernest Mailhot, who wrote the article, is an Eastern ramp worker. He was recently the Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor of Miami. Even some workers who have generally disagreed with Mailhot in the past praised the article.

A big sale like this means the *Militant* is getting into the hands of people who have never seen it before. It helped others who distribute the paper at Eastern meet new people.

Workers wanted to talk about

how to win the fight against Frank Lorenzo's union-busting. Lorenzo is chairman of Texas Air, which took over Eastern. Articles in the *Militant* issue also covered struggles by paperworkers and helped in the discussion of union-busting.

Some union members said the airlines-crisis article was one of the few they've read that clearly told their side of the story. But one worker said he disagreed with the section of the article that said the United States is ruled by a tiny class of billionaire families.

The Eastern sales were only part of the effort by Miami-area supporters of the *Militant* and Span-

ish-language monthly *Perspectiva Mundial* that week. We sold 280 copies of those publications and four subscriptions.

Many were bought by unionists who participated in the Martin Luther King Day labor and community rally attended by 500 people. Sales also went well at a King Day parade.

Hundreds of Haitian working people participated in the two actions. Several bought *Militants* because of the coverage of events in Haiti.

Jeff Miller is a member of IAM Local Lodge 702 at Eastern in Miami.

1,000 copies of this 'Militant' going to Britain

BY NORTON SANDLER

A thousand papers. That's how many copies of this issue of the *Militant* we're shipping to London. This is 330 more than we normally send every week.

In a telephone interview, Jon Silberman said distributors of the *Militant* in Britain will be making a special push to circulate this issue, which includes coverage of the recent Communist League convention in London.

A focal point for that sales effort will be the March 5 demonstration called by Britain's Trades Union Congress. The action will protest Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's cutbacks in the country's nationalized health care service. The distribution effort will also include getting the issue placed in several bookstores around the country.

The circulation of the *Militant*, the Spanish-language monthly *Perspectiva Mundial*, and the Marxist magazine *New Internationalist* has been increasing in Britain since last fall.

We have been sending about 700 copies of the *Militant* to Britain each week. About half are mailed from London to subscribers in Britain, other parts of Europe, and to Africa and the Middle East.

British distributors have been selling the other 350 papers at plant gates, in working-class communities, and at demonstrations.

"A month ago," Silberman said, "210 copies of the *Militant* and *PM* were being sold every week. Now it's about 300." But, Silberman explained, this total does not include copies sold at demonstrations, rallies, and picket lines.

"Sales in Manchester have gone from 17 to 50 a week. In South Wales they've gone from 37 to nearly 60," he said.

Silberman said they are getting a good response at plant gates. Seven rail workers at the Willesden depot in northwest London have bought papers from a plant-gate team. About five copies are being purchased each week by telephone maintenance

workers at their workplace in London.

Several dozen *Militants* were sold to auto workers during the recent strike at Ford plants in Britain. And Silberman said coal miners and their supporters buy a majority of the papers sold in Nottinghamshire every week.

Some of the best sales, Silberman pointed out, have been at demonstrations. On February 2, some 300 people picketed the U.S. embassy in London demanding an end to U.S. aid to the contras. More than 90 participants bought a copy of either the *Militant* or *PM*.

Striking teachers bought 50 copies of the *Militant* at a recent demonstration. Another 23 copies were sold at a gay rights demonstration in Manchester.

Last week, our business office in New York received 74 *Militant* subscription renewals, the highest weekly total since we initiated our renewal campaign in January. Seven readers purchased two-year subscriptions.

Next week, we will feature an interview with Arthur Scargill who was recently reelected president of Britain's National Union of Mineworkers.

We are getting are getting some of our best responses by following up on the subscriptions sold on the job to industrial workers.

The increase in renewals is a direct result of the efforts of our distributors, who are in the process of contacting everyone who purchased a subscription to the *Militant* or *PM* during the fall 1987 circulation drive.

Militant supporter Joanne Kuniansky said seven subscriptions were sold last fall to members of the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers union at the ARCO oil refinery in Houston, Texas. So far two of these unionists have renewed, and Kuniansky expects at least two more to renew when their subscriptions run out. Only one person told her he wasn't interested.



G.M. Cookson

Militant distributors selling papers at miners 'gala' in Britain last year

Railroad fined for safety violations

BY JON HILLSON

BOSTON — Striking New England rail workers got a boost February 14 when the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) announced it was fining Guilford Transportation Industries \$734,900 for some 650 safety violations incurred in the period 1984 to 1987.

Guilford is the parent company of Springfield Terminal, where 1,200 members of the United Transportation Union have been on strike since November 1987 over the demand for safe working conditions.

This is the first time the FRA has taken such action against a railroad. The violations include the condition of Guilford's locomotives and freight cars, track defects, inaccurate record keeping, unsatisfactory upkeep of safety devices, faulty handling

of equipment, and other infractions.

Peter Greene, a rail workers' union representative from Portland, Maine, explained that many of the railroad's safety violations were first brought to light by the UTU. The strike itself began after a union member was killed on the job. In January a second death occurred when a scab was killed at work.

John Riley, the FRA administrator handling the case, criticized Guilford for refusing to cooperate with the rail agency, which wanted to negotiate a settlement for \$229,725 — less than one-third the size of the fines finally levied. "It is absolutely unprecedented that a carrier would flatly refuse to pay any of its fines, even one," Riley said. Guilford has "gotten the rather humiliating distinction of being the first railroad ever to be sued by the agency to meet its safety obligations."

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—Whitey Wells

spokesperson for striking United Mine Workers of America Local 1972, Sheridan, Wyoming

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U.S. cops directed harassment of socialist

Documents reveal they ordered strip search of Warren at Canadian airport

BY FRED FELDMAN

Recently released documents indicate that U.S. immigration cops were involved in directing the racist and political harassment — including a strip search — of Socialist Workers Party leader Mac Warren when he attempted to enter Canada last September 19. The censored documents were released in February by Canada's ministry of customs and excise, more than three months after Warren's attorneys demanded access to them.

When Warren arrived at the airport in Montreal September 19 to begin a visit to Canada, the clerk told him to step aside. That began five and a half hours of abuse at the hands of U.S. and Canadian officials.

Warren was taken to a detention cell. His bags were searched. They contained nothing that was regarded as contraband. But instead of releasing Warren, the officials began questioning and abusing him about political material they had found in his bag.

Warren was barred from making a phone call for several hours. His bags were searched four more times. Then he was strip searched.

When Warren was finally placed on a plane returning to the United States, a U.S. agent loudly suggested, in the presence of other passengers, that he had been caught with "a kilo" of illegal drugs.

When Warren subsequently publicized the racist and political exclusion, the incident provoked outrage. This was reflected in many protest messages to the Canadian authorities. When Warren returned to Montreal on September 24, he was allowed into Canada without incident.

The documents reveal more about the involvement of U.S. officials in the attack on Warren.

Canadian immigration officials, who initially denied having strip searched Warren, now say they were asked to do so by U.S. customs agents.

Robert Emond, an official responsible for customs operations at the Montreal airport, reported to his superiors September 30 that Warren was turned over to U.S. customs officials after he had been detained. "His baggage had not been examined by Canadian customs at this stage," Emond claimed.

"U.S. customs searched his baggage and carried out a 'frisk search' and suggested to the [Canadian] immigration agent that it would be a good idea to make a body search, because the U.S. customs agent had found a roll of electrical tape.

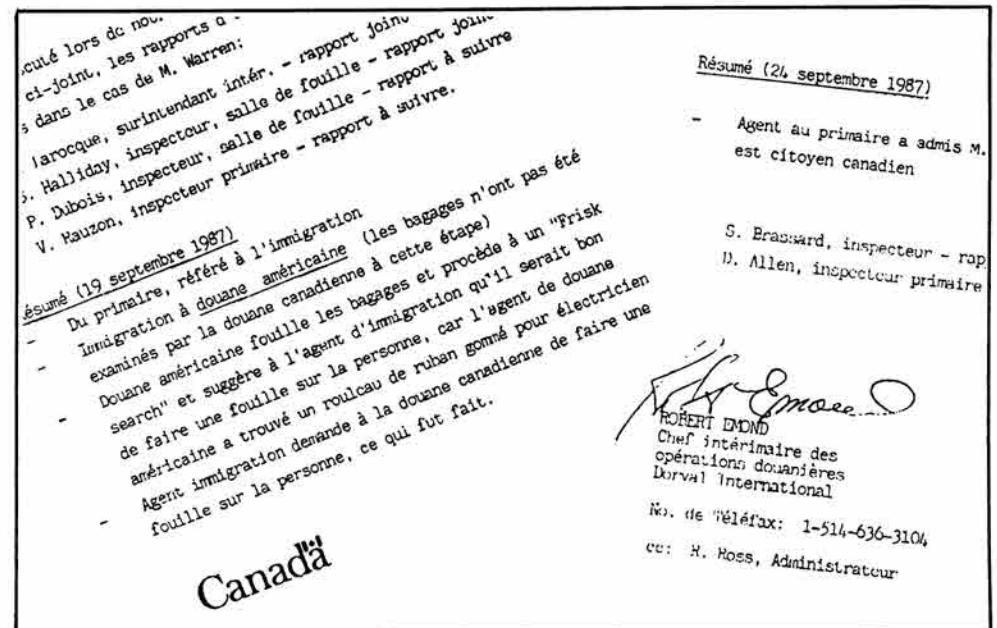
"The immigration agent asked Canadian

customs to make a body search and this was done."

In a December letter to a Canadian member of Parliament, Gerry Wiener of the Canadian immigration ministry cited Warren's possession of "several documents, including a long list of names along with documents showing, 'Socialist Workers Party,'" as part of his justification for the treatment accorded the socialist. Wiener charged that Warren "refused to give explanations" on this and other matters.

Wiener also stated that Warren was "inadvertently" admitted to Canada when he returned September 24. "As Employment and Immigration Canada officials were informed that Mr. MacWarren [sic] was coming back to Canada," he explained, "a lookout was given to Canada Customs to refer him to immigration secondary."

Wiener gave no reason why customs authorities had been ordered to again block Warren's entry, after hours of searches, questioning, and checks had turned up no grounds for doing so.



Report of Canadian customs officer explaining that it was U.S. official who called for a strip search of Socialist Workers Party leader Mac Warren.

Pa. oil workers blast company racism

BY MICHAEL MAGGI

MARCUS HOOK, Pa. — Striking members of Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers Local 8-234 and union officials have denounced racist and sexist remarks made by a British Petroleum manager and a Marcus Hook BP refinery doctor. The workers' story was widely reported in the press and has united the OCAW members as never before.

During contract negotiations just before the strike began on February 3, BP manager Ed Kulinski tried to justify company demands for extending the lower tier of the wage structure at the refinery by saying the 1973 court-ordered affirmative action programs had forced the refinery to hire "untrainable" workers.

The union negotiating committee responded by walking out of the session and issuing a statement that pointed out, "BP is the third largest oil company in the world — with significant holdings in South Africa.

"We reject the company's attempt to divide us up. We reject their racist code words. Local 8-234 negotiates for all its members. We have no second-class citizens in this union," the statement continued. It concluded, "An injury to one, is an injury to all."

The news of the walkout and the statement by the negotiating committee, which is all white, brought more Black and women union members than usual to the union hall to discuss the company slanders and their experiences at BP.

On the heels of this, workers learned that the company doctor, Harold Herman, had told the union health and safety chairman that "certain ethnic groups have a lower threshold of pain than others."

Herman told OCAW Financial Secretary Denis Stephano, "According to some studies, American Indians and Jews have a high tolerance for pain and certain Africans and women have a low tolerance for pain."

This company slander was advanced to explain its charge that 17 percent of the plant workers are "sick-leave abusers." The company wants to reduce sick benefits by 50 percent whenever plant absenteeism reaches levels deemed unacceptable by the company.

Kulinski is on record as saying that he found a correlation between absenteeism and "a certain zip code" in Chester, a predominantly Black community, and even "certain family names."

Clarence Johnson is a Black maintenance mechanic hired in the early 1970s before affirmative action programs forced BP and other oil companies to hire more Blacks and women. He told the *Militant* all the Blacks in the refinery are fully qualified operators or first-class (journeymen) maintenance mechanics.

"What did any of us know about refineries when we were first hired," said Johnson. "Like everyone else at BP, no one is born an oil worker. Like everyone else, we were

trained and then we learned."

Other workers told of experiences where all the women were failed out of training classes and put into the labor pool.

Doug Anderson, a Black worker at BP for 15 years, explained how he had to go to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission for help in pressuring the company to allow him to complete a welding training program and take the test to qualify as a certified welder.

On the picket lines and in the union hall, strikers said that the solidarity being shown throughout the local in the face of the company's divisive attack was an important

step forward that strengthened the local in its fight.

British Petroleum investment in South Africa became a focus of some discussion. Several union leaders and members felt a need for education about apartheid and South Africa. The local has invited South African exile Nomonde Ngubo to speak at a public meeting at the union hall. Ngubo is now an International representative of the United Mine Workers union.

Michael Maggi is an operator at Koch refining and a member of OCAW 6-662 in Pine Bend, Minnesota.

Paperworkers march with BP strikers

MARCUS HOOK, Pa. — More than 50 striking Pennsylvania paperworkers from an International Paper mill joined 40 members of Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers union Local 8-234 to picket at the gates of British Petroleum here on February 10. The oil workers struck the Marcus Hook BP refinery on February 3.

The members of embattled United Paperworkers International Union (UPIU) Local 1787 in Lock Haven led chants and union songs on the picket at the gates and then on a short march along the length of the refinery front fence.

Willie Stout, a leader of UPIU Local 1787, addressed the oil workers and paperworkers at a short meeting later at the OCAW headquarters.

"We all have to prepare ourselves to be in a big battle," Stout said. "We have to get our memberships involved, get them active

in committees, keep every member informed, and morale up."

Wayne Slivenski, OCAW 8-234 president, thanked the paperworkers for their solidarity and in turn pledged to continue oil worker solidarity with their struggle.

Slivenski said, "All too often in the past unions stood by when their brother and sister unions were forced to take concessions. We thought it was 'them' and not 'me,' thank god."

Oil workers thought, "We were fat cats in the 1970s, but after the concessions of the 1980s we learned that when you give in to concessions, that just means that two years down the road they will be back demanding more take-aways," Slivenski said.

"This is a common fight against concessions," he emphasized. "An injury and a take-away from one is an injury and take-away from us all."

—M.M.



Workers from both unions discussed their common fight against concessions

New from Pathfinder

Surrogate Motherhood, Women's Rights, & the Working Class

by Cindy Jaquith

The case of "Baby M" has been one of the year's leading news stories. But behind the often-sensationalized headlines are a number of important questions addressed in this pamphlet:

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Paperworkers build support for strike in W.Va., Pa. tour

BY SUSAN LaMONT

Striking paperworkers from International Paper Co.'s mill in Lock Haven, Pennsylvania, have stepped up their outreach efforts in recent weeks with a tour through northern West Virginia and southern Pennsylvania, a solidarity caravan to Philadelphia, and a February 1 rally at the Pennsylvania State Capitol in Harrisburg.

The 720 members of United Paperworkers International Union Local 1787 have been on strike against IP's concession demands since last June. They joined 2,700 other UPIU members who have struck or been locked-out of IP mills in Jay, Maine; De Pere, Wisconsin; and Mobile, Alabama. More than 400 scabs are currently working in the Lock Haven mill.

In addition to an injunction limiting pickets to six per gate, the Lock Haven strikers have faced serious cop harassment throughout their strike, especially from state police.

The strikers at all four IP mills are expanding their efforts to take the message of their struggle to workers, farmers, students, and others throughout the country with the help of the Corporate Campaign, headed by Ray Rogers.

"People are realizing solidarity is the only way we can grow and stop corporate greed," said Lock Haven paperworker Carlyle Probst. "We are becoming aware of just who we are fighting and we're fighting as a whole union, becoming one-minded and unified."

Probst was one of the five-member team of Local 1787 strikers on the northern West Virginia and southern Pennsylvania tour, which was out February 3-14. "People are really concerned when they realize what's happening" to the IP workers, commented another striker, Larry Shade.

The Lock Haven strikers spoke to 12 union gatherings during their tour, starting

with the Marion County Labor Council in Fairmont, West Virginia. Other union engagements included speaking to five locals of the United Mine Workers (UMWA), three steelworkers' locals, a garment union meeting, and a letter carriers' local.

They also spoke to the Tri-County United Labor Council, a union organization that opposes "right-to-work" laws. Several of the Lock Haven workers attended a slide presentation on Nicaragua, and gave a talk to antiwar activists there about their strike.

More than \$2,000 was donated during the tour, with \$1,600 coming from two UMWA locals.

Philadelphia caravan

A caravan of nearly 60 Lock Haven workers rolled into Philadelphia February 8 for three days of outreach activities.

During their tour the strikers met with high school and college students, three paperworkers union locals, communications workers, sheet-metal workers, and oil workers on strike against British Petroleum. They also attended a reception hosted by the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union.

Willie Stout, a member of Local 1787's executive board, explained how easy it was for International Paper to get an injunction restricting the union's pickets at the plant. All IP had to do was show the judge a videotape of union pickets at the mill, and claim the strikers were intimidating scabs, he said.

With the injunction in place, hundreds of scabs — mainly unemployed workers from nearby towns — were able to cross the small picket line. "Scabs were getting the wages we were getting before we went out," Stout said. "Now the company has reduced their wages." He also reported a dramatic increase in the number of injuries in the mill.

The caravan included a news conference held at the Communications Workers of America Local 13000 offices. Nearly 100 strikers from Lock Haven attended the conference. Willie Stout spoke for Local 1787 and was joined by Ed Allen from Corporate Campaign; Vince Maisano, international vice-president of the CWA; and Max



Militant/Linda Slodki

Strikers from International Paper Co.'s mill in Lock Haven, Pennsylvania, during recent solidarity caravan to Philadelphia. They met with unionists, students while on their visit.

Levine of the Philadelphia Central Labor Council.

Marshall Smith, vice-president of Region 3 of the paperworkers, said, "What is happening to the rights of workers?" Displaying photographs of bullet holes in a striker's car and another of state police and helicopters surrounding the Lock Haven strikers, Smith said, "The issue involved is a strike and struggle for all of labor. It is something that affects everyone."

The paperworkers' ended their tour of Philadelphia by joining the picket of striking oil workers at the British Petroleum Refinery in nearby Marcus Hook.

Valerie Johnson from Morgantown, West Virginia; and Richard Gaeta and Linda Slodki from Philadelphia contributed to this article.

Workers at International Paper Co.'s mill in Camden, Arkansas, voted overwhelmingly February 16 to reject the company's latest contract offer. United Paperworkers International Union Local 275 represents the workers there.

"The company made more money last year than the mill is worth," said Local 275

President Tom Drummond, after the vote. "Now they are claiming they must cut our wages and change work rules in order to be more competitive. IP wants to break the union."

Wackenhut, a private security outfit, is setting up cameras and other surveillance equipment inside the mill, the union reports. Trailers are being set up to provide temporary housing for BE&K, the strike-breaking construction firm already being used by IP elsewhere.

In January striking and locked-out UPIU members from Mobile, Alabama; Jay, Maine; and Lock Haven, Pennsylvania, had traveled to Camden to meet with Local 275 members and encourage them to join the fight against IP's concession demands. Some 150 members of the Camden local gave an enthusiastic welcome to the visiting paperworkers.

Bill Meserve, president of UPIU Local 14 in Jay, has encouraged workers in his local to establish a direct relationship with the Camden workers by writing or calling them to come to Jay, "rank and file to rank and file."

The Camden workers' contract expires at the end of February.

Paper strikers tell their story

BY LINDA SLODKI

PHILADELPHIA — Following a February 9 news conference held here to publicize the Lock Haven paperworkers' strike, I was able to speak with three of the paperworkers who attended. I spoke with John Connelley, Jim Gray, and Willard Probst, whose time in the mill ranges from 15 to 30 years.

I asked them how the strike was going in Lock Haven. "The town is split in half," Connelley explained, "sister against sister, brother against father, families against each other."

"We've been very peaceful," Probst added. "But we get helicopters and the state police."

"I was in Vietnam," Connelley said. "What I see is corporate greed. Why were we there in Vietnam? You go to the picket line, call someone a scab, and they arrest you. Where is the freedom of speech? We have to get this country to open up its eyes."

"We are fighting for all of the labor movement," Gray agreed. "We have to get out to your average workers and tell them it can happen to them," he said.

I asked what impact the strike had had on them. Connelley explained that the strike was hard on his wife. "We have monthly bills. We have to pay on our home and our utility bills. We have a limited income. But there is more of a closeness among the families."

What effect would their strike have on the rest of the paper industry, I asked. "All the other companies are watching us," Connelley answered. "We will win it. All the other companies will be on their guard and they will give their workers decent contracts." Another commented that all industries, not just paper, are watching the IP strike.

"Even when this is over," Probst said, "and we win, it will not stop there."

Pathfinder expands worldwide sales

BY HELEN MEYERS

NEW YORK — Pathfinder has just released its 1988 catalog. The attractive 44-page booklet is designed to help boost the distribution of revolutionary books and pamphlets produced by Pathfinder, said Mark Severs, the publisher's promotional director.

The catalog's "New from Pathfinder" section features titles released since the 1986 catalog. These include *Nelson Mandela: The Struggle Is My Life*, which has sold some 20,000 copies since its U.S. publication less than two years ago.

Nearly 3,000 copies of *Che Guevara and the Cuban Revolution* were shipped out to bookstores and distributors in the first two months following its publication last October.

Among other new titles are *Cosmetics, Fashions, and the Exploitation of Women* (4,000 copies sold since publication), and *Founding the Communist International, Proceedings and Documents of the First Congress: March 1919* (1,600 shipped out since publication in August).

"Pathfinder is gaining a reputation around the world as the publisher that presents the ideas of revolutionaries in their own words," Severs explained.

Pathfinder produces books and pamphlets by Fidel Castro, Maurice Bishop, leaders of Nicaragua's Sandinista revolution, Malcolm X, Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, V.I. Lenin, Leon Trotsky, and Rosa Luxemburg. It also publishes works by Eugene V. Debs, W.E.B. Du Bois, and leaders of the U.S. communist movement

such as James P. Cannon, Farrell Dobbs, Evelyn Reed, and others.

"We plan a major promotional mailing of the catalog to some 20,000 U.S. bookstores, university and public libraries, Pathfinder customers, and political organizations and individuals," said Severs.

A mailing will also be sent out by Pathfinder's London distributor to Britain, Ireland, western Europe, and Africa; by its Sydney, Australia, distributor throughout the Pacific and Asia; and by its newest distributor in Toronto, Canada.

For the first time, several hundred catalogs are being mailed to the English-speaking Caribbean, Severs reported. "In recent years, Pathfinder has won new accounts and readers in Trinidad and Tobago, Grenada, Jamaica, Guyana, and elsewhere," he said. Some 400 Pathfinder books and pamphlets were sold at a book-fair last July sponsored by the Oilfields Workers' Trade Union of Trinidad and Tobago.

Hundreds of copies of the catalog will be distributed later this month from the Pathfinder stall at the annual Philippines book-fair in Manila, Severs added. Some 2,000 copies of Pathfinder books and pamphlets have been distributed in the Philippines over the past two years.

Severs explained that the catalog will also be used by the more than 35 Pathfinder retail bookstores in the United States, Australia, Britain, Canada, and New Zealand. "We're finding new readers in Scandinavia and Iceland, too, where English is read by

a large percentage of the population," he said.

Pathfinder bookstores sell revolutionary literature not only from their shelves, according to Severs. "Supporters also set up book tables at political events and at busy street corners on weekends."

"The catalog should find its way into the hands of workers, farmers, students, and other fighters looking for ideas about the economic and political issues that confront humanity today."

In addition to Pathfinder books and pamphlets, in English and Spanish, the new catalog features the English-language *New International*, a magazine of Marxist politics and theory, and its French-language counterpart, *Nouvelle Internationale*.

Pathfinder also has a catalog of Spanish-language titles that includes both those published by Pathfinder and those it distributes.

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Behind U.S. drive against Panama

Refusal to back U.S. intervention in region angers Washington

BY SUSAN LaMONT

A sharp escalation in Washington's campaign to bring down the government of Gen. Manuel Antonio Noriega, head of Panama's army, took place in early February. This was marked by the announcement that two U.S. federal grand juries, at the instigation of the Justice Department, had indicted Noriega and more than a dozen top officers in Panama's army on various drug trafficking and racketeering charges.

This unprecedented move, and the whole anti-Noriega drive, is one of the most serious violations of Latin American sovereignty in recent years.

As Noriega himself explained February 7 on the U.S. television news show "60 Minutes," "There is a political conspiracy against Panama. Not against Noriega, but against Panama."

The Reagan administration's efforts on this front have been greeted with enthusiastic praise from leading Democratic and Republican members of Congress. A lurid press campaign aimed at backing the White House frame-up of Noriega has been dutifully orchestrated by the big-business media.

Playing on the genuine concerns working people have about drugs, Washington has calculated that it will be able to generate more support to intervene in Panama's internal affairs by surrounding its effort with a thick smokescreen of anti-drug propaganda. At a minimum, U.S. officials hope to create enough confusion to obscure the real issue: Panama's centrality to U.S. military, economic, and political objectives throughout Latin America, in particular Central America and the Caribbean.

Panama's strategic role

The entire modern history of Panama — a small country of some 2 million that lies between Central and South America — has been shaped by its geography. It is narrow enough to allow the construction of a canal connecting the Atlantic and Pacific oceans.

The U.S. government signed a treaty with Panama in 1903, which gave Washington control "in perpetuity" — that is, forever — over the canal and surrounding Canal Zone, a 10-mile-wide strip of land that split Panama in two.

Construction and control of the Panama Canal, which was completed in 1914, was an important element in the rise of U.S. imperialism as a dominant economic power. Occurring during the same period as Washington's conquest of the Philippines, Puerto Rico, and Cuba, the acquisition of the Panama Canal and zone played a major role in Washington's efforts to dominate Central America, the Caribbean, and



Thousands of Panamanians demonstrated in 1964 for right to fly Panama's flag in Canal Zone. U.S. troops killed more than 20 and wounded many others.

the rest of Latin America.

The opening of the Panama Canal created a major new trade route and meant the Canal Zone became an important commercial center. Every year, the U.S. government reaped millions from the operation of the canal, while paying Panama a pittance for its use.

Control of the canal gave Washington the needed leverage to intervene in Panama's affairs — to install pliant regimes; make sure laws favorable to U.S. big-business interests were passed, such as the establishment of a "free trade zone" in Colón; and to use military force inside the country when needed.

The Canal Zone became the home for a giant complex of more than a dozen U.S. military bases, including the headquarters of the U.S. Southern Command.

Central America and the Caribbean are now at the heart of the revolutionary advance of the world's toilers, and the region of sharpest conflict with U.S. imperialism. The U.S. military presence in Panama was initially motivated by U.S. rulers to protect the canal. It has, in fact, become a center for the Pentagon's counterrevolutionary military and intelligence operations throughout the region. There are currently some 10,000 U.S. troops stationed in Panama.

Over the years, these bases have provided a training ground for thousands of Latin American military personnel. Dictators like Chile's Augusto Pinochet, and Nicaragua's Anastasio Somoza sent their armies and officers to Panama to be trained by the U.S. military.

Special counterinsurgency

Mobile Training Teams based in Panama have been dispatched throughout the region and to other parts of the world as needed, including to El Salvador and Honduras, and to Bolivia in 1967 to track down and murder Cuban revolutionary leader Che Guevara. U.S. military installations in Panama are used as a base of operations against the liberation struggle in El Salvador.

An expanded spy operation centered at Howard Air Force Base near Panama City has been established, from which the National Security Agency can monitor all of Central and South America. The base is the point of departure for spy missions against Nicaragua. A battalion of Green Berets is also stationed in Panama.

In a March 1987 dispatch from Panama, the *New York Times* reported, "A new research team at the United States military headquarters here is seeking ways for United States and Latin American forces to win small wars against leftist insurgents in this region." While the Pentagon has deemed it wise to relocate some of its operations, such as the infamous U.S. Army School of the Americas, the remaining fa-

cilities in Panama remain strategically important.

Movement against U.S. occupation

The people of Panama, however, have long objected to the occupation of part of their country by Washington. Having seen Panama impoverished while the inhabitants in the zone lived in comparative wealth, angered that the benefits of the canal go to enrich others, subject to racist treatment at the hands of zone residents and the U.S. military, and opposed to their country's loss of sovereignty, the workers and farmers of Panama have long fought to eliminate these injustices.

In the 1930s, protests against Washington's "supervision" of Panama's elections and other demands to limit U.S. power outside the Canal Zone forced a revision of the 1903 treaty. Further massive protests after World War II, including a general protest strike, forced the Pentagon to agree to withdraw from its bases outside the Canal Zone. These had been vastly expanded during World War II.

During the 1950s, militant protests, often led by students, asserted Panama's sovereignty over the canal by demanding the right to fly Panama's flag inside the Canal Zone.

In 1961, a demonstration of some 500 Panamanians marched into the Canal Zone, charging that the planes that had attacked Cuba during the Bay of Pigs invasion that year had taken off from an airstrip in Panama used by the U.S. government.

A demonstration of thousands of Panamanians on Jan. 9, 1964, demanded the right to fly Panama's flag in the Canal Zone. The peaceful protest was attacked by U.S. troops and Canal Zone police. More than 20 Panamanians died, and about 500 were injured.

Outrage over the U.S. actions pushed the conservative government of Panama to break diplomatic relations with Washington and to demand a complete revision of the 1903 treaty.

Torrijos regime

This growing movement of Panama's toilers to regain sovereignty of their country — part of the rising anti-imperialist movement in Latin America and the rest of the world — paved the way for the radical nationalist regime of Gen. Omar Torrijos.

Torrijos came to power in Panama in 1968 as the result of a coup by National Guard officers. (Panama's army is now called the Panama Defense Forces.) Although Torrijos stepped aside as chief of state in 1978, he remained the most important figure in the government, as well as head of the army, until his death in a plane crash in 1981.

Torrijos campaigned internationally for a new treaty that would return control of the canal and Canal Zone to Panama.

At a meeting of the United Nations Security Council, which convened in Panama City in March 1973, Torrijos said, "We ask the world represented here to give us your moral support in this struggle, since our people is reaching the limit of its patience."

"We will never be an associated state, a colony, or a protectorate. Nor will we add another star to the flag of the United States," he continued. Huge demonstrations against U.S. control of the canal and Canal Zone were organized.

Torrijos also earned the hostility of Washington by breaking the pattern of subservience to U.S. foreign policy followed by Panama's previous governments.

In a period when most Latin American regimes were going along with Washington's quarantine of revolutionary Cuba, Torrijos established friendly relations with that country and its prime minister, Fidel Castro. He told the UN Security Council meeting that "every minute of isolation suffered by the brother people of Cuba, constitutes 60 minutes of hemispheric shame."

He also established relations with a number of African and Arab countries and opened an embassy in Algeria. By August 1975 Panama had joined the Movement of Nonaligned Countries.

The Panamanian leader visited Cuba in January 1976, and a mass rally was held in his honor in Havana. Fidel Castro spoke at the event, giving Cuba's complete backing to Panama's struggle to regain the canal from U.S. imperialism.

"How could anyone struggle against such a mighty power, against an arrogant empire that right up until today considered itself the absolute master of this hemisphere?" the Cuban leader asked. "Could Panama fight this battle alone? Never. . . . Panama needs allies on a world scale, it must seek the support and solidarity of every country in the world."

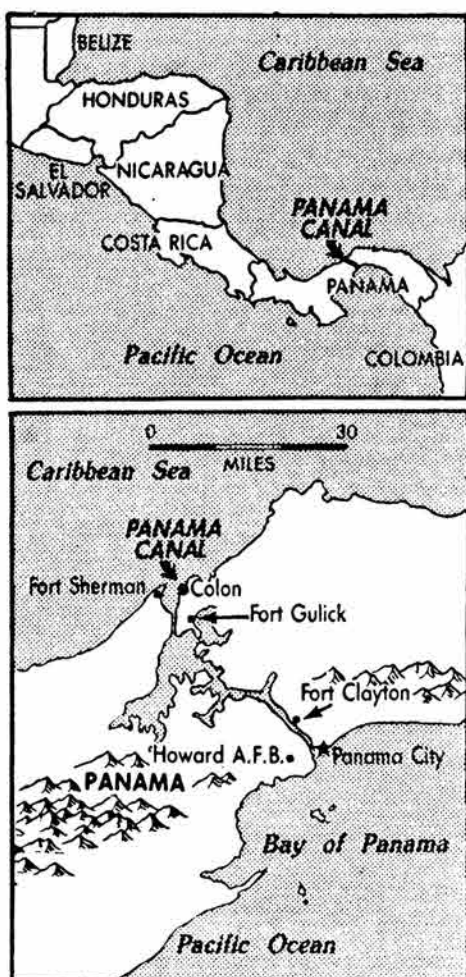
"We must work for the creation of a united front in Latin America in support of Panama," Castro continued, "so that Panama won't be alone in her demands for the recognition of her sovereignty over the Canal Zone."

Torrijos also gave material and diplomatic support to the Nicaraguan people's struggle to overthrow the U.S.-backed Somoza dictatorship during 1978 and 1979, and maintained friendly relations with the Sandinistas after the triumph of the revolution in July 1979.

Opponents of the canal treaty in the U.S. Congress tried to use Torrijos' open support for the Sandinistas to torpedo final implementation of the treaty, going as far as organizing a House hearing on Panama's "gun-smuggling" to the Nicaraguan insurgents.

Torrijos also denounced U.S. military intervention in El Salvador. In February 1981, then U.S. secretary of state Alexander Haig said,

Continued on Page 17



Nicaraguan peasant and rancher group debates land reform

BY HARVEY McARTHUR

MANAGUA, Nicaragua — "The program of the revolutionary organization of the peasantry must state explicitly that it will continue fighting to meet the demands of the landless peasants. As long as there are peasants without land in this country, this should be the first point in your work."

This was Alonso Porras, vice-minister of agrarian reform, taking the floor at a meeting of the National Council of the National Union of Farmers and Ranchers (UNAG) held here recently. Porras focused on the hot topic of the meeting: land reform.

There was quite a bit of discussion at the three-day meeting about how UNAG should relate to the government's land-distribution program. The discussion shed light on some of the conflicts between social classes in the Nicaraguan countryside today, and how these are reflected within UNAG.

UNAG was founded in 1981, two years after the Sandinista revolution overthrew the Somoza dictatorship. It now has 125,000 members. According to a 1986 government report, 54 percent of UNAG members are poor peasants, 40 percent are owners of medium-sized farms, and 6 percent are "rich employers." Most of the poor peasants who belong to UNAG are organized into collective farms or farm cooperatives.

UNAG's leadership seeks to unify all of the union's members along the lines of cooperating with the government in increasing production and modernizing agriculture. It works to unite the rural population in defending the country against the U.S.-organized contra war. UNAG also presses for government policies on pricing, credit, supplies, and other questions that benefit all farmers and ranchers.

But if all UNAG members share some common interests, they are also divided on important issues. The conflicts in the countryside — between landless peasants and big landowners, and between farm workers and capitalist farmers — are reflected within the organization.

Farm workers have their own organization, the Rural Workers Association, and do not belong to UNAG. But poor peasants frequently hire out as farm hands during the harvest. They tend to view farm workers' demands differently than do capitalist farmers, who exploit wage labor.

'Lead peasant demands for land'

The challenge of setting policy for an organization encompassing all peasants and farmers was posed sharply by Sandinista leader Luis Carrión when he addressed UNAG's national congress, which was held in 1986.

"Of all the serious problems in the countryside, the one we consider most important, and which is the cause of many evils and injustices, is the land problem," he said. The demands for land being raised by peasants "show the urgent need for not

only the government, but the entire nation to give a rapid and satisfactory solution."

Carrión urged UNAG to champion the demands of poor peasants for land and to make this its first priority.

"UNAG has been a broad and democratic organization where there is room for all producers, without discrimination of any kind," he told the delegates. "This has been one of the keys to its success as an organization, and this characteristic should be carefully maintained."

"However," he continued, "we think that within the broad character of its organizational and leadership work, it should mainly prioritize the small producers, the poor peasants. They were historically the most isolated and exploited. They never had access to education or health care. They were driven from their land. They were the weak, without any protection, those who never had a voice and never had money to buy influence."

"They are the ones who make up the majority of our militia battalions, and they have placed all their hopes in the revolution. More than anyone, they need and deserve the support, help, and backing of your organization. Their interests and needs should receive the main attention of UNAG and its leaders," Carrión concluded.

Many of the delegates at the 1986 congress were poor peasants who had benefited directly from the agrarian reform. At their urging, and after a lengthy discussion, the congress adopted a resolution declaring that UNAG "supports, organizes, and leads just demands of the peasants for land."

Focus on 'unjust expropriations'

Whether this strong stand for land distribution would be reaffirmed was the most important subject at the council meeting, held here in January.

The tone of the discussion from the floor was different from the 1986 congress. Most of those in attendance at the council meeting were medium and big farmers or UNAG full-time staff. Few were poor peasants.

Many speakers focused their remarks on several disputed cases of land expropriation. They considered these unjustified because the properties in question had been producing efficiently and their owners were UNAG members. They urged the national council to be more militant in demanding that these lands be returned.

UNAG President Daniel Núñez called on the meeting to support, in particular, the demands of five UNAG property owners who recently had lands expropriated. These expropriations, he said, were "causing anarchy that we cannot permit because it does not help the relations that must exist between the producers and the revolution."

He argued that "the land reform cannot continue taking over land that is producing, because that really contradicts national policy."



Landless peasants displaced by contra war

Militant/Roberto Kopeck

The initial draft of the document on UNAG's work presented to the meeting for discussion reflected this orientation. It said that land should be expropriated only if it has been abandoned.

In contrast, the land reform law allows expropriation not only of abandoned land, but also of land needed "for reasons of public necessity or the interests of society." The government has used this law to take some land from big property owners to give to landless peasants and to resettle farm families who had to abandon their land because of the U.S.-backed contra war.

The draft did not mention the fight of the landless to get land. The only perspective offered to such families was the suggestion that they join existing collective farms or cooperatives that had room for more members.

Gov't: continue mobilizations for land

It was in this context that Porras intervened in the discussion. He took the floor several times to argue for amending the draft document to include a strong stand in support of land reform.

"I see very little in the document" on land distribution, he said. "It doesn't say 'UNAG will push forward the poor peasants without land.' This should be the first point in the program of UNAG's work."

UNAG should "continue the mobilization of the landless peasants and guarantee

that their demands are met until the time when there are no peasants left without land," he argued.

Porras made it clear that with the large number of landless families and rural war refugees in the country, it will be necessary to expropriate more private land. He explained that the government first tries to find abandoned land, or unused land belonging to the state, to meet the peasants' needs. But it will continue to expropriate land if no alternative can be found.

Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega also addressed the closing session of the council meeting. Land reform is "a necessary part of the revolutionary transformation," he told the UNAG leaders. This includes "giving land to those who are now demanding land with every right to do so: the peasants who were robbed of their land in the past."

The landless peasants "are saying: 'This is our chance. This is what the revolution was made for.' This is their chance," Ortega said, "and they have every right to demand land."

The participation by leaders of the workers' and peasants' government in the meeting was decisive in persuading the council to agree to reaffirm UNAG's previous stand of championing the land reform process. Although the final version of the document was not immediately available, the chairperson of the meeting stated that the point on land reform would be revised along the lines urged by Porras.

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Alonso Porras, vice-minister of agrarian reform, congratulates woman who has received title to land. At right, Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega, who told UNAG meeting that land reform "is what the revolution was made for."

International Socialist Review

Supplement to the Militant March 1988

Communists discuss world politics, Cuba, perspectives in Britain

BY DOUG JENNESS

LONDON — Nearly 160 delegates and visitors participated in a conference of the Communist League of Britain here January 30–February 1. They met to discuss the growing economic crisis of capitalism and its relation to the pattern of world revolution, advances in the Cuban revolution, and the political situation in Britain and perspectives for communists in that country.

The gathering discussed a report by Mary-Alice Waters on the place of the Cuban revolution in world politics today. Waters is an editor of *New Internationalist*, a magazine of Marxist politics and theory. She is also a leader of the Socialist Workers Party in the United States.

Jack Barnes, a contributor to *New Internationalist* and the national secretary of the SWP in the United States, presented a report on what the October stock market crash reveals about the capitalist economic crisis and the political implications of this crisis for the international class struggle.

Brian Grogan presented a report on the political situation in Britain and the perspectives of the Communist League. Grogan is a leader of the Communist League who has been active in the workers' movement in Britain for two decades and the author of "The Working-Class Road to Peace," which appeared in the winter 1983–84 *New Internationalist*. His presentation was followed by a report on the proposed financial campaigns of the league and election of a central committee.

Each of these reports was adopted by the delegates following extensive discussion.

Nineteen guests from Burkina Faso, Canada, Colombia, France, Iceland, Spain, Sweden, and the United States attended. Many of these guests responded to an invitation to speak on the political questions under discussion.

Greetings were presented from representatives of the Revolutionary Workers League in Canada, Militant Socialist Organization in Iceland, and SWP and Young Socialist Alliance in the United States.

Messages were read from the Socialist Action League in New Zealand and from David Deutschmann, editor of *Che Guevara and the Cuban Revolution* (Pathfinder/Pacific and Asia, Sydney, 1987).

Deutschmann noted, "Many of you played a major part in the building and the successful launching in London of the new Pathfinder title *Che Guevara and the Cuban Revolution*. Your launching, one of a series held in several countries, has helped to make available the political ideas of one of the outstanding Marxists of this century, and

aided all of us in understanding the deepening process of the Cuban revolution."

'Turning point in Cuban revolution'

Waters opened her report by noting that "1987 represented a turning point in the Cuban revolution." The kind of advances taking place in Cuba today, she said, were appropriately symbolized by the opening of 54 new child-care centers in 1987 in the city of Havana alone. The new facilities were all built by volunteer work brigades. Everyone, from students and retired people to doctors and construction workers, is participating in the brigades. This has been the response of the Cuban people to efforts of the Cuban Communist Party to create the resources necessary to solve a number of pressing social needs.

Waters said that Cuban President Fidel Castro's description of the process currently under way in Cuba as a "revolution within the revolution" captures what is taking place there. "The masses have rediscovered what they are capable of," Castro told a gathering of economists from Latin America and the Caribbean in November. And that is the heart of what is taking place in Cuba today, Waters said.

"The Cuban leadership is correcting mistaken policies that have tended to demobilize people's creative energies and obstruct collective action to solve problems such as the housing crisis or child-care needs."

Cuban Communist Party leaders have noted that they were moving in a mistaken direction for a number of years, Waters explained. People were starting to believe that socialism would develop automatically, that it was only a matter of perfecting a mechanism for economic planning and management. "Today the Cuban leaders are emphasizing how erroneous such a concept is," Waters said. "Building socialism is above all a political task of the workers and farmers, they say, a question of developing communist consciousness and a communist leadership. And that is what they are striving to do in Cuba today in a qualitatively new way."

Along this line, the Cuban leaders are rejecting the argument that the only way to mobilize the creative energies and productive capacities of working people is through the use of capitalist market mechanisms and by accepting — even promoting — growing social and economic inequalities among working people. They are insisting and showing in practice that the opposite is not only possible, but the only road toward socialism and communism.

As Castro put it in his speech last October on the 20th



G.M. Cookson

On London picket line during February Ford workers' strike. Nurses have also been prominent in struggle demanding more public health-care funds.

anniversary of the murder of the great Argentine-born Cuban revolutionary Che Guevara, anyone who thinks that "man is an incorrigible little animal, capable of advancing only if you feed him grass, tempt him with a carrot, or beat him with a stick" will never be a revolutionary, never be a communist.

Waters explained that many of the problems today being discussed in Cuba, and on which important steps are now being taken, are not new. Growing income differentials, falling productivity, shoddy quality, bureaucratic indifference to people's real needs — such as child care and housing — are trends that had been developing for a decade or more and that had often been addressed by party leaders in the past.

"But the source of these problems is understood more deeply and broadly today," Waters commented, "and the road to solving them through the revolutionary mobilization of the Cuban people is producing a revitalization of revolutionary determination and deepening politicization." As Castro said recently, it is a proletarian spirit that is coming to the fore Cuba today.

Cuba as part of the world

Waters noted that she is often asked why the process of rectification was not begun earlier if Cuban leaders were aware that problems and abuses had been developing for many years. "The most important thing is to place Cuba in the world," she noted. "Without that you can't even ask the right questions. The Cuban revolution does not exist in a vacuum."

More than anything else, she explained, "it has been the impact of the revolutionary advances in Central America and the Caribbean, especially the 1979 victories in Grenada and Nicaragua, that have made possible a new deepening of the revolution in Cuba as well."

The victory of the Cuban revolution in 1959, Waters noted, gave impetus to a revolutionary upsurge throughout the Americas. From the outset, the Cuban leadership counted on and helped to advance these struggles of the workers and peasants. Beginning in the late 1960s, however, especially after the murder of Che Guevara in Bolivia in 1967, the revolutionary tide ebbed. Despite continuing courageous struggles by small groups in a number of countries, defeats and reaction held sway in Latin America throughout the 1970s. "It was a period of severe isolation for Cuba," said Waters. "As the Cuban leaders themselves have noted, it was the national liberation war in Vietnam that bought time for Cuba. The attempt to crush the Vietnamese people absorbed the resources and attention of U.S. imperialism long enough

Continued on next page



G.M. Cookson

Session of January 30–February 1 conference in London of Communist League of Britain, which discussed growing economic crisis of capitalism and its relation to world pattern of revolution.

Continued from previous page

for Cuba to catch its breath and consolidate its gains."

The defeat of the American empire in Vietnam and the crumbling of the Portuguese empire in Africa in the mid-1970s altered Cuba's isolation. The participation of tens of thousands of Cuban volunteers in the successful Angolan effort to beat back the 1975 South African invasion of Angola was a highpoint of internationalism and commitment. And Cuba's role in Angola continues to be an example of proletarian internationalism for the whole world.

Victories in 1979

But the big change for Cuba came in 1979 with the victory of the Nicaraguan and Grenada revolutions. Waters said this was graphically expressed at the July 26 rally in Cuba that year — one week after the overthrow of the Somoza tyranny in Nicaragua — when representatives of the new Sandinista government joined Fidel on the platform. A few months later, at a mass rally with both Sandinista leader Daniel Ortega and Grenadian Prime Minister Maurice Bishop present, Castro spoke of Nicaragua, Grenada, and Cuba as the "three giants" rising up on the doorstep of U.S. imperialism. The Cuban revolution was no longer alone.

Two months later Castro assumed the chairmanship of the Movement of Nonaligned Countries for three years. Cuba used this opportunity well, to defend the interests of the underdeveloped countries against imperialist exploitation, and further eroded the U.S. policy of trying to isolate Cuba internationally. When Castro spoke before the nonaligned movement in October 1979, he genuinely did speak on behalf of the "children of the world who don't even have a piece of bread."

Waters explained how the Cuban people responded over the past nine years to the revolutionary gains in Central America and the Caribbean. This has included the millions-strong Marches of the Fighting People and the establishment of the Territorial Troop Militia in 1980; the hundreds of thousands of teachers, doctors, and others who volunteered to take internationalist assignments in Nicaragua, Grenada, Angola, Ethiopia, Indochina, or wherever else they were needed; and now the process of rectification that grows out of these experiences and their impact on the Cuban people.

At the forefront of the rectification process, Waters said, are the volunteer work brigades that are building child-care centers, housing, clinics, swimming pools, bakeries, roads, dams, and other socially needed facilities. "Nothing captures better what is happening today," she said. Conscious men and women are confidently organizing themselves to collectively solve their most pressing problems through their own free and voluntary labor — problems that bureaucratically minded planners and technocrats told them could not be solved because there were no resources."

The Cuban people have responded to the lead given by the Cuban Communist Party, Waters said. They have declared to the world, "We will create the resources necessary from our own soil, through our own labor."

Despite the fact that Cuba, like other underdeveloped countries, is feeling the effects of the world imperialist crisis, Waters noted, the Cuban people are not retreating but continue to move forward.

They are bringing to life things that Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Che Guevara explained about the place of volunteer labor in the transition to socialism and communism, Waters said. They are setting a new political example for communists around the world. The Cuban leadership is today urging everyone to read and study Che's writings on these questions. "Bringing Che to the fore today is a trumpet blast," she commented, "indicating the direction of the revolution."

Waters also noted that the new steps forward in Cuba have not been accomplished without substantial and continuing resistance. In a speech on November 29 of last year, Castro took up the reactionary views of those who oppose the new course of the revolution and noted that the Cuban CP was itself being "renovated" in the process. (The full speech is printed in the January 29 *Militant*.) The CP has been renewing itself — deepening its political understanding and strengthening its working-class character, she said.

By consciously promoting Afro-Cubans, women, and young workers through an affirmative action policy it is becoming a more proletarian leadership. Without continuing and deepening that policy the rectification process could not be carried through to the end, Waters noted. Through all of this the Cuban CP is becoming an even more conscious communist leadership and example for all of us to learn from.

Advances for women in Cuba

During the discussion, several delegates took up the significance of Cuba's achievements in advancing the status of women. One noted that few feminists, however, point to this example.

Waters explained in her summary that this is a very common weakness, even among feminists in Latin America. "Some argue that because a larger number of women play prominent national leadership roles in Nicaragua, for example, that is proof that Cuba is behind Nicaragua on the fight for women's liberation." But this is not true, she explained.

Women's liberation cannot be achieved without creating the material foundations for it, and implementing social policies that progressively eliminate the domestic double burden that women bear, and fighting to change the attitudes, habits, and consciousness of women and men. That is a tall order, and history has demonstrated that it cannot be led forward by anything less than a communist leadership, a conscious working-class leadership.

The Cuban revolution has made giant strides in changing the material conditions of life for women and integrating women into the labor force, which is the precondition for women's liberation, Waters noted. She cited Cuba's record on wiping out illiteracy, the level of education attained, and advances in medical care, including contraception and abortion services available to all and infant and maternal mortality rates that are among the lowest in the world.

Massive resources have been devoted to developing child-care facilities and boarding schools and encouraging women to enter the labor force. As a result nearly 40 percent of the labor force today is female.

But as the rectification process is again demonstrating, Waters continued, even these kinds of gains are not enough without conscious leadership. As part of the rectification process, the Cuban Communist Party has been putting the public spotlight on and combatting the reactionary attitudes held by some administrators and economists who think resources should not be devoted to child-care centers, boarding schools, and laundry facilities.



The 1979 revolutions in Nicaragua and Grenada helped break isolation of Cuba and open door to rectification process. Above, Nicaraguan leader Daniel Ortega, Grenadian leader Maurice Bishop, and Fidel Castro at 1980 May Day rally in Havana.

ties. They even argue that it is better for a woman to be unemployed than a man.

The Cuban revolution has demonstrated that whatever the level of underdevelopment may be, steps can always be taken to move in the direction of women's liberation. Moreover the Cuban CP is showing the kind of working-class leadership necessary to continue to advance the fight. "The example that has been set by Cuba," Waters concluded, "is a beacon for the entire world. Because of what the Cuban revolution has done and is doing today, the odds are increased that others, including the working people of Nicaragua — and Britain too — will be able to make similar advances in the future."

Generalized economic crisis

Following the adoption of Waters' report on Cuba and the rectification campaign, Barnes reported on the mounting economic crisis in the capitalist countries and its political implications.

Barnes noted that the crisis had become a practical question for thinking workers. The stock market crash, he said, signaled that "the generalized crisis that is coming will ravage working people throughout the capitalist world. And the devastation that has already hit the colonial world and the pauperized sections of the working class in the imperialist countries will get even worse."

Barnes briefly reviewed the main developments in the U.S. economy between the early 1970s, when the end of the accelerating post-World War II expansion of capital accumulation became apparent, and the October 1987 stock market plunge.

He noted that the 1974-75 recession was the first worldwide one since 1937-38. It was followed by the 1981-82 recession, which was the most devastating one in the United States in 45 years. These two recessions were separated by a brief period in which inflation soared and interest rates reached their highest point in the century.

Barnes explained that the labor movement in the United States was in a rout from 1981 to 1986. "Workers not only began voting themselves wage cuts, but more and more acceded to loss of any control over working conditions," he said. "The actual value of our labor power was driven down, and most importantly, the work process in many plants was reorganized, breaking down safety standards, control over speed of work, and degree of responsibility of each worker for the product," he said.

At the same time, while union membership declined, no major unions were busted, Barnes said, nor were young workers beaten in decisive struggles. "That remains the unresolved question for the employers and one that will be more and more a combined economic and political fight."

Racial segregation reinforced

During this period, the gap between the unemployment rates of Black and white workers widened. This was not the result of any major defeats in battle or the reversal of the gains of the civil rights movements. But winning equal rights under the law didn't put Blacks in an equal place.

The workings of the capitalist economy in the context of a society with a legacy of racial segregation has led to

reinforced segregation in the job market and housing. It has also deepened class differentiation among Blacks.

The result has been the growth of a pauperized sector of the working class that is threatened with rampant homelessness and is victimized by deteriorating health, decreasing educational opportunities, and demoralization. "The problem of being denied even the possibility of a job," Barnes noted, "is much more devastating than being forced to work too hard."

Barnes cautioned that adjectives that describe various social conditions workers face — "homeless," "unemployed," "undocumented," "temporarily employed" — should not be taken as social categories separate from the working class. Uniting the working class requires recognizing fellow workers as fellow workers, not as pariahs, regardless of the situation capitalism has placed them in, he said. This is the only way that workers can see themselves as part of a class and fight with a class-conscious outlook.

Curve of capitalist development

In looking at the broad sweep of what is happening to capitalism, Barnes described it as a shift in the curve of capitalist development. He said this was a term used in the Communist International in the early 1920s to express the course of economic development — growth of industrial production, foreign trade, etc.

A 1923 article by Leon Trotsky, a representative of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in the Communist International's leadership, presented an excellent description of this, Barnes said. (See "The Curve of

Capitalist Development" in *Problems of Everyday Life*, Pathfinder, New York, 1973.)

This is better than referring to oscillations, cycles, or other such terms, which to many imply shifts that have an internally lawful regularity. The periodic upturns and downturns in the capitalist business cycle, for example, are largely determined by laws inherent in capitalism.

But broader shifts in the development of capitalist society are determined by the working out of the laws of capitalism in their relation to conditions such as acquisition of new countries and continents by capitalism, the discovery of new natural resources, and such major events as wars and revolutions.

Falling rate of profit

In addition to squeezing more surplus value out of workers, Barnes explained, the various capitalists are driven by competition between each other to rationalize production. That is, they introduce new technology and machinery in order to reduce unit costs of their products. They hope this will improve their chances of success in the market.

In this process, however, as each capitalist pursues his own interests, the average rate of profit for the economy as a whole is lowered. Eventually the drop in the profit rate undermines the incentive to expand productive capacity and thus slows down the rate of growth of investments to expand plant and productive capacity.

As the stagnation of capital accumulation develops, Barnes said, "the partial crises of the economy, such as financial crashes and the collapse of major firms, instead of being absorbed and their negative effects bypassed, begin warping the entire mechanism, threatening to bring it down."

Recessions, for example, tend to become more protracted and severe and upturns less stable. Moreover, he said, what can start as a recession in one country can escalate into a deep international economic crisis. Speculative use of money capital under the pressures of declining profit rates further destabilizes the entire world capitalist structure.

Barnes noted that from 1851 to 1873 the curve of development rose sharply. Then from 1873 until 1894 there was a downturn and protracted stagnation, evoking the first use of the term "Great Depression."

Another rise in the curve occurred from the mid-1890s until 1914. Capitalism entered a period of acute crisis during and immediately after World War I, followed by a temporary stabilization of less than a decade with the defeat of revolutionary openings in Europe following the October 1917 Russian revolution.

Barnes also cited the Great Depression that began in 1929 as an example of a downward curve, which ended with the onset of World War II and the post-World War II expansion of capital.

"Now we see the same phenomenon that led up to the 1930s," he said. The "long-term rate of profit has declined to the point where accumulation of capital has slowed down, international competition has increased, and the distribution of wealth and income has shifted substantially against working people."

This shift, Barnes said, began to become apparent at the end of the 1960s, but the crisis has become increasingly more severe. "This was shown by the October stock market crash. Far from being extraneous to the basic workings of the capitalist system, the stock market's instability and explosiveness reflect where it's at."

'No automatic way out'

The downward curves in capitalist development, Barnes stated, are the inevitable result of the tendency of the rate of profit to fall that's inherent in capitalism. "But there is no automatic way out of it and back up," he said.

The historically wealthy families, Barnes explained, are using banking capital that can't be profitably invested for expansion of machinery and plants to instead buy out other companies or to speculate in the stock market, commodity exchange, and currency trade. They also lend money to countries in the colonial world in order to collect interest — as the bleeding of the great majority of the toilers of the world intensifies. But none of these offer a road out of the decline. They not only are an expression of the crisis, but help deepen the crisis.

Barnes said, up until now the situation can best be described as a "creeping crisis." It is devastating the peoples in the colonial world and reaching into sectors of the working people in the imperialist countries.

But it hasn't become generalized yet. "We don't know the exact forms this will take," Barnes stated. "It's like the quiet before the storm. It's hard to believe that something's actually going to happen, but it's deeply sensed."

No imperialist replacement

It's clear that imperialism is in decline, Barnes said. "Nothing can reverse this. And U.S. imperialism has slipped economically relative to its main competitors in Japan and Europe."

"But we can't end there," Barnes continued. "The fact new in history is that there is no capitalist power to step in and replace the declining leader this time. At one time or another since capitalism arose, the Netherlands, Por-

tugal, Spain, France, and Britain were dominant powers or the dominant power in an alliance. When their empires declined, there was always a stronger world capitalist power that could step in.

"But today, neither German nor Japanese imperialism, which are U.S. imperialism's principal competitors, are nuclear powers," Barnes pointed out. "And it is inconceivable that they can become so without a political defeat of the working class. Strategic nuclear arming of these two countries would be unacceptable to the people of the world today. It would provoke revolutions and/or war with the USSR to try to do it."

Moreover, "the European Common Market can't replace U.S. imperialism," Barnes explained. "State powers must replace state powers. And the Common Market isn't a state power. It's principally a customs union of a group of state powers. The national state remains today the basic form in which the capitalist ruling families operate and which regulates the interests of 'multinational' and 'transnational' corporations," he said. "At the same time, the internationalization of capital increases and accelerates the instability of economic and state relations."

"The reason the dollar can't be replaced as the dominant world currency," Barnes continued, "is because U.S. imperialism can't be replaced as the dominant world power." In fact, in spite of the U.S. dollar's rapid decline in the immediate aftermath of the October crash, Barnes pointed out, imperialist governments bought more dollars. They gambled on taking a financial loss rather than have the entire currency system collapse. This shows how much the dollar is chained to other currencies and vice versa.

Barnes noted that one thing that has not happened is for one or another of the most industrially developed countries in the colonial world to emerge as an imperialist power.

Iran, which some saw as a logical candidate for such a role, has not only not become a regional imperialist power, but is not even a reliable bastion of support for imperialism. Since the overturn of the Shah in 1979 by the revolutionary mobilization of the toilers, Iran has become a threat to imperialist interests in the Mideast.

Other countries, such as Mexico, Argentina, and Brazil, far from developing into centers of finance capital, Barnes noted, are the biggest debtors to the imperialist banks.

Action perspective

Barnes said, "This unstable crisis has been creeping so far, but it's going to explode. It's this that gives the development of an action perspective for working people and the labor movement a sense of immediacy." He indicated several major elements to such a program.

First, Barnes said, is the fight for jobs. "The biggest division among workers under capitalism," he said, "is between employed and unemployed. This is a sharper division even than between young and old, male and female, Black and white, or skilled and unskilled workers."

Barnes noted that the program drawn up by Karl Marx for the delegates to the first congress of the International Workingmen's Association in 1866 stated, "A preliminary condition without which all further attempts at improvement and emancipation [of the working class] must prove abortive, is the *limitation of the working day*."

"This remains true today," Barnes said. "And with the coming of a generalized crisis, this will be seen more and more not just as a good idea, but as essential to protecting our class and creating conditions to organize and fight." The demand for shortening the workweek is a proposal to spread the available work to more workers.

Barnes added that Marx's document explained that without an internationalist approach unionists can't advance.

Unlike the demand of many employers for tariffs or other measures to protect their industries, a demand most union officials support, the demand for a shorter workweek doesn't pit workers from different countries against each other. Rather, Barnes said, "It offers workers a common proposal that can help unify us."

No concrete slogan has arisen yet internationally, he said, such as the demand for an eight-hour day, which the international labor movement rallied around for decades. But in Germany, he pointed out, a struggle by the labor movement for a 35-hour workweek has been going on for several years. And in Japan, implementation of a 40-hour workweek law is stalled in parliament while the legal workweek remains 48 hours. Whatever the specific situation in a given country, he said, the key is getting across the need for the unions to lead a nationwide political fight to reduce the workweek.

The second point, Barnes indicated, is affirmative or positive action with respect to hiring and upgrading women, Blacks, and other especially oppressed sectors of the working class. "We not only champion these as rights for the oppressed," he said, "but as needs of the entire working class to unify itself in struggle."

Key to working people uniting as a class to defend ourselves and move forward against "their" — the capitalists' — interests and for "our" — the workers' — in-

terests, Barnes said, is for workers in the imperialist countries to advance demands that can forge unity with working people in the colonial world.

The labor movement needs to present immediate proposals that can provide the basis for struggling to protect tens of millions of working people from the devastation in the oppressed countries. This devastation has been exacerbated by the debt burden and will get substantially worse with the coming of a generalized international crisis.

What is needed, Barnes said, are action proposals that don't hold dealing with the present devastation hostage to the day when revolutions will establish more workers' and farmers' governments.

A key proposal that the labor movements in the imperialist countries should be fighting for, Barnes said, is canceling the massive debts owed by Third World countries to imperialist bankers in the United States, Britain, France, and other imperialist countries.

This, he said, should be connected to the fight to end all forms of protectionism by the imperialist countries, to eliminate the practice of dumping low-priced goods on the world market, and to get rid of quotas. All of these practices are used by the imperialist monopolies to impose unequal trade relations on the colonial world.

Barnes added that workers in the imperialist countries should champion trade union rights for workers in the oppressed countries. And the right of workers to travel freely from one country to another in order to work or to meet with workers is essential, he said.

Barnes noted that Cuban President Fidel Castro has been urging a campaign around basically the same set of proposals.

The international connections that this set of proposals aims to establish between workers have the same goal as the demand for a shorter workweek, Barnes said — to unify workers as a class.

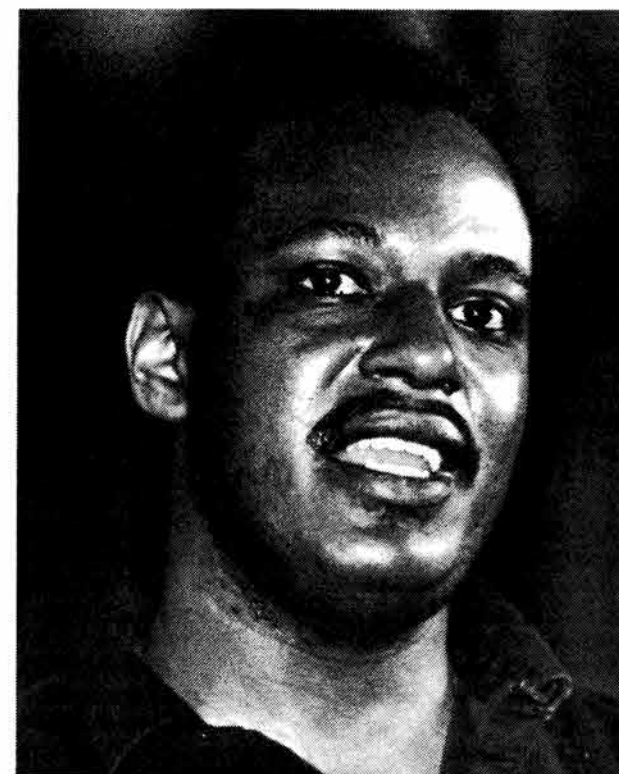
Based in working class

Barnes said that it's clear that the working-class vanguard can't prepare for the generalized crisis that's coming without being based in basic industry and the industrial unions. "There would be no way that we could resist the mounting pressures that affect the petty-bourgeois radicals — pressures that lead to seeing 'our' interests as workers to be the same as 'their' interests as capitalists. Being part of the working class and discussing political developments as they unfold with fellow workers is the only way we can even begin to see the world from the standpoint of the interests of the working class as a whole."

Moreover, he said, it's necessary to integrate our understanding of politics in our own countries into world politics. "We are part of a world struggle," he said. "There is no such thing as *British* workers or *American* workers or *Australian* workers. These are sections of the international working class who live and work in Britain, the United States, Australia, and all imperialist countries. There are no separate national strategies for the working class of each country."

Barnes emphasized that it's going to be new, young forces that will come forward and meet the coming political challenges. He cited the young fighters from Palestine. "They are like people who have come from nowhere," he said. "And that's the way it's going to be in every country. New forces, whose names people don't know, are going to come forward and radically change

Continued on next page



G.M. Cookson

Mac Warren, a leader of the U.S. Socialist Workers Party, spoke on labor struggles in United States during discussion at London conference.

Continued from previous page

the character of the labor movement and its organizations."

Barnes said that the coming economic crisis and its political implications presents a challenge to all communist forces in the world and those whose revolutionary activity is drawing them toward communism. "This has opened many opportunities, which will increase," he said, for communists in Britain, the United States, Sweden, and other imperialist countries to collaborate with each other. It will also offer more possibilities to have political discussions and engage in joint activity with political leaders and activists from the Caribbean, Central America, Africa, the Philippines, the Pacific Islands, and other countries and regions.

Participants elaborate many points

Participants in the conference discussion elaborated on many of the points, most of them from their experiences as communist activists in the industrial unions in Britain.

Several of the guests from other countries also contributed to the discussion. The representative from Iceland noted the relevance of the discussion for her country. She said that for the first time immigrant labor was beginning to be used in Iceland, which posed new challenges for the labor movement there.

One of the guests from Sweden noted the different ways that the paths of communists in her country continually cross those of Cuban Communists, Nicaraguan Sandinistas, leaders of the African National Congress of South Africa, and others.

Mac Warren from the SWP in the United States reviewed some of the lessons of the ruling-class offensive against workers in the United States, particularly citing examples from the struggles of meat-packers.

Michel Prairie from the RWL in Canada and editor of *Nouvelle Internationale* discussed a recent trip he made to New Zealand, Australia, and New Caledonia, and trips other leaders of his organization have recently made to Haiti, Trinidad, and Burkina Faso. He said this was part of the RWL's efforts to learn about struggles in other countries and hold discussions with other revolutionaries.

Protectionism

One question raised in the discussion by several speakers was protectionism and the echo it gets in the labor movement in Britain.

Kathy Mickells, a coal miner from the United States, spoke on this question and related some of the discussions she participated in at the International Miners' Organisation conference in Sydney, Australia, late last year.

Mickells noted that the National Union of Mineworkers of South Africa has asked miners in other countries to back a boycott of South African coal. "This is pretty clear," she said. "Supporting this boycott, in the context of the current rise of the freedom struggle in South Africa, is an act of political solidarity with the struggle of fellow workers."

But some other proposals, she said, "are protectionist and divide workers internationally."

Mickells cited the proposal that workers urge a boycott of coal from Colombia and other countries that employ child labor. "This," she said, "is a rationalization for a protectionist stance, which means blocking with the ruling class and capitalist state."

"Miners throughout the world," she urged, "should fight against child labor in Colombia or wherever it exists. But the way to stop that isn't by urging a boycott of coal from those countries, but to join with miners and other workers around the world to urge a fight against this barbaric practice."

In his summary, Barnes added that only when unions make the strategy of the entire working class their business and see themselves *within* the class can they move

forward and succeed. "The fight for jobs through a shorter workweek, affirmative action, and cancellation of the debt hanging over the underdeveloped world," he said, "are not simply demands for especially exploited sections of the working class. They are preconditions to the kind of political unification necessary for any effective fight-back."

Barnes explained, "There's no union strategy that will accomplish this. Intelligent tactics and solidarity can advance struggles a great deal. And the most combative workers can't keep moving forward without fighting. But each new gain, each new stage in the struggle poses new questions that must be answered."

Ruling-class offensive in Britain

Brian Grogan reported on the political situation in Britain and the perspectives of the Communist League. In an interview with the *Militant* following the conference, he elaborated more fully on recent developments in Britain.

Grogan said that the ruling-class offensive against working people in Britain began before Conservative Party leader Margaret Thatcher became prime minister in 1979. "It began during the last Labour Party administration," he said, "and has intensified under Thatcher."

As a result of these attacks, Grogan said, living conditions of working people have worsened. "The gap between rich and poor has widened," he pointed out, "and the division between conditions in the North — including South Wales — and the Southeast has deepened."

"Union membership has declined," Grogan noted. But in spite of this, "the employers haven't been able to drive down real wages," he said.

The biggest fightback against the employers' offensive during the past decade, Grogan said, was the 1984-85 coal miners' strike. Even though the National Union of Mineworkers lost the strike, which was a big blow, the miners' union and its leadership have continued to struggle and have become a pole for forces in the working class that are looking for a road forward.

Grogan noted that neither the employers nor the government have driven through "a decisive defeat of the working class."

He said that there has been a recent spurt of strikes that illustrate the character of the battles that are taking place and some of their limits. Employers are moving toward trying "to reorganize the work process in order to squeeze more profits out of workers like they've been successful in doing in the United States," Grogan said. "This is the key issue in the struggle at the Ford plants. And the workers there are sharply resisting."

Some 32,500 auto workers at Ford in Britain struck February 7. After 10 days on the picket line, they forced the bosses to concede a two-year instead of a three-year contract and to marginally increase their wage offer. In addition they prevented management from immediately imposing draconian changes in work practices and massive speedup.

The weakness of the struggle, however, like most in Britain, Grogan said, is that it was not based on an industrial or social view. So despite the militancy of the strikers, the employers were successful in getting the majority of workers to settle the work rules issue on a plant-by-plant basis. "Now," he said, "the fight around the work rules will begin, but it will be from a weaker standpoint."

Two days after the Communist League conference, a one-day protest was conducted by health workers throughout the country's public hospital system. Nurses were prominent in this action in an unprecedented way. This protest was part of a struggle that has broken out, Grogan explained, demanding more resources for the National Health Service (NHS).

In the past decade, services by the NHS have been allowed to continually erode, he said. Moreover, the proposed allocation of funds can't keep up with the growing demands on the system. Even a Tory-dominated parliamentary committee has acknowledged, Grogan said, that



Ford strike picket line in London. Ten-day walkout for workers in a weaker position in this fight.

the NHS has suffered a cumulative underfunding of £1.8 billion (US\$3.1 billion) since 1980.

Grogan said that in the last two or three years, the rate of economic growth has increased somewhat as a result of the economic upturn. But it's only just last year that manufacturing output got above the 1979 level, he noted.

Although the unemployment level has dropped to 9 percent, Grogan explained, "the official government figures, as in the United States, give the wrong impression. They don't take into account involuntary part-time work, youth on various sorts of bogus 'job training' schemes, and discouraged workers who have been jobless so long they don't appear in the figures." Although the official unemployment rate in Britain is quite a bit higher than in the United States, it is one of the lowest in Europe, he noted.

Number of homeless grows

Grogan said that under the current conditions, the legacy of lower wages and poorer working conditions in Scotland, Wales, and the northern parts of England have resulted in a disproportionately higher number of unemployed in those areas. Many jobless young workers move to London seeking work.

"But many of them can't find places to live, and the number of workers who are homeless is growing. There are at least 50,000 officially reported in London," he said.

There are also mounting attacks on low-rent council (public) housing, Grogan added, and there are moves to undermine rent regulation of private housing. "The construction of new council housing has virtually ceased," he said. "And the government has been forcing the sale of council housing, including to private speculators."

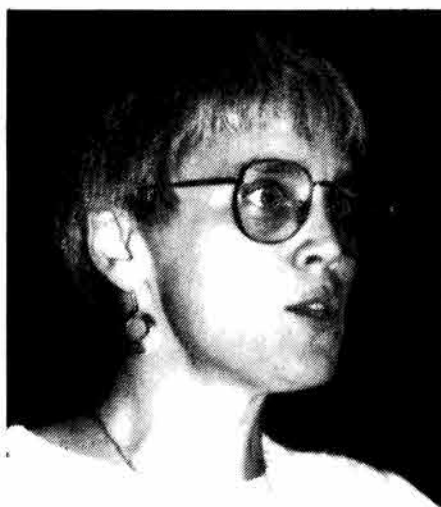
Grogan pointed out that one of the Thatcher administration's major efforts to convince workers that they had a stake in the capitalist system was substantially increasing the number of British workers who own their own homes — partly through the sale of council houses to the tenants. But the irony of this, Grogan said, is that it has not led to greater security in housing as the big increase of the homeless shows.

"Private home ownership as a solution to the housing problem is an illusion," Grogan said, "just as Frederick Engels pointed out more than 100 years ago." (The "Housing Question" is printed in *Marx and Engels Selected Works*, Vol. 2.)

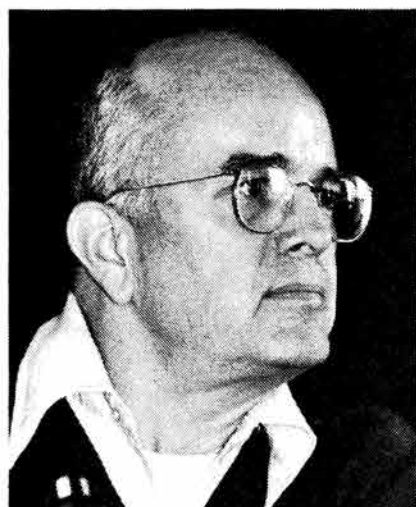
In order to sell council housing to private speculators, evictions are increasing. Grogan cited the example of 200 Bangladeshi families that were evicted from a block of flats in the London borough of Tower Hamlets last year. The aim was to sell the block to speculators who would refurbish it and let the flats at jacked-up rents.

While virtually no council funds are going to construction of council housing, Grogan said, in many cases the borough councils in London are paying astronomical rents to owners of slum dwellings to put up the homeless. "The conditions in these 'hotels' are really wretched," he said.

Grogan also described the deterioration of education. One of the most serious attacks is the reorganization of the education system. The proposed dissolution of the Inner London Education Authority will mean a further



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G.M. Cookson



G.M. Cookson

Presenting reports at conference were Mary-Alice Waters, a leader of U.S. Socialist Workers Party; Jack Barnes, national secretary of U.S. SWP; and Brian Grogan, a leader of Communist League of Britain. Waters is also an editor of *New Internationalist*. Barnes and Grogan are contributors to the journal.



G.M. Cookson

ed bosses to concede on some issues, but work-rule changes will be settled on a plant-by-plant basis. This puts

deterioration of education in the poorer, mainly inner London boroughs, where unemployment is highest. Consequently, the class-biased chasm in the quality of education will increase, he said.

Farm foreclosures mount

In Britain, the percentage of the work force in agriculture is only slightly smaller than in the United States. Grogan said working farmers in Britain, as in the United States, have come under fire. "The biggest wave of foreclosures since the 1930s has been taking place," he said. "Cuts in farm support programs by the European Economic Community (EEC) [Common Market] have accelerated the number of farmers going bankrupt. Thousands of farmers have gone under, and especially over the last couple of years, dairy farmers."

Grogan said that some very drastic proposals are currently under discussion in ruling circles. One would open up 80 percent of British farmland to real estate developers.

This proposal is also connected to the recent agreements reached at the EEC emergency summit meeting. It decided that one of the ways to get farmers to produce less was to pay them to set aside land to lay fallow for a few years, Grogan explained.

The other major decision was to cut price supports for agricultural products. A sharp fight broke out over the EEC ceiling for grain production, above which subsidies would be cut. Thatcher had held out for a lower ceiling, but finally conceded. She was in favor of more cuts because the bigger farmers in Britain will benefit. Labor productivity on British farms is higher than in other parts of Europe.

The Labour Party leadership attacked Thatcher for not adequately defending the interests of British farmers by conceding the higher limit.

Grogan said that there were protests by farmers during the last round of cuts aimed at dairy production. The more severe cuts just made against grain producers may very well spark broader protests, he said.

There was also a very important expression of solidarity by dairy farmers in Wales with striking miners during the coal strike, he said.

Attack on democratic rights

Grogan went on to explain that the British rulers have been chipping away at democratic rights and strengthening the executive authority of the government.

Two draconian pieces of antiunion legislation have been imposed. One outlaws secondary pickets. During the miners' strike, for example, the National Union of Mineworkers organized flying pickets at steel plants and power plants where coal was being delivered. The law against secondary pickets was invoked, and union funds were sequestered.

Another new law is that workers have to hold a secret ballot to call a strike. Strikes can't be called through mass meetings. "This law was also used against the miners," Grogan said, "and it is currently being used against the striking seafarers who work on the ferries between Britain and continental Europe and between Britain and Ireland. The court ordered an injunction and the sequestering of union funds and forced the union nationally to call

off the strike. It still continues at the local level," he said.

"But the attack on democratic rights is broader than this," Grogan continued. "Thatcher, for example, more and more bypasses Parliament as certain decision-making powers get concentrated in the cabinet or among certain cabinet ministers," he pointed out.

"But there is wariness among many in the ruling class about how fast to cede these powers," Grogan said.

This has been reflected in the furious debate surrounding the Thatcher administration's banning of former intelligence officer Peter Wright's memoirs, *Spycatcher*. These memoirs contain revelations about the workings of the British secret police. This book, however, was published last year in the United States and can be obtained in many bookshops in Britain.

These revelations have sparked great furor and a debate over the prerogatives of the government and free speech, Grogan said.

The Court of Appeal ruled February 10 against the government's attempt to bar newspapers from reporting the contents of *Spycatcher*. The government is challenging this ruling, which will be heard by all nine Law Lords, the highest judicial body in Britain.

In another case, an investigation has revealed that the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) in the six northern counties of Ireland "had conspired to cover up their 'shoot-to-kill' policy when a number of Irish activists were shot dead in 1982."

Four policemen were tried and acquitted through manipulation and omission of evidence, which provoked an outcry. This forced an internal police investigation. Deputy Commissioner John Stalker from Manchester was assigned to the investigation. But when word began to get out that he had discovered that the cover-up of the "shoot-to-kill" order reached right up to the top of the RUC, he was summarily dismissed in 1986 on trumped-up charges. Another police officer was given responsibility. But, Grogan said, "he also found such orders existed and that top officers were responsible."

The Thatcher government, however, refuses to prosecute the cops involved for breaking the law because it would infringe on "security interests."

The resulting furor, not least from the Irish government, has forced the instigation of disciplinary proceedings, including against the chief constable of the RUC himself.

Birmingham Six case

"The outrage in Ireland was reinforced with the dismissal of the appeal of the Birmingham Six," Grogan continued.

"In 1974, six Irish activists received life sentences for allegedly bombing a pub in Birmingham and killing 21 people. Since then fresh evidence has come to light," he said, "revealing that the defendants were the victims of a police conspiracy frame-up and cover-up."

In January, Grogan continued, the Court of Appeal dismissed their appeals. "This ruling provoked widespread anger here, including swelling the annual 'Bloody Sunday' action on January 30 to nearly 7,000 — considerably more than previous actions in recent years. It was the largest action around Irish rights in a decade. As a result, on February 18 the Court of Appeal said the six have

permission to petition for a final appeal to the Law Lords."

Grogan said that historically the structure and activity of the secret police has been particularly aimed at the Irish freedom struggle. This has been used as an excuse for the general increase in the use of the secret police and restriction of rights.

"And most recently," Grogan said, "the government has announced that it intends to make the Prevention of Terrorism Act a permanent part of British law." This noxious piece of legislation, he said, was introduced by a Labour government in the hysteria following the Birmingham bombings.

Among other things, this act allows police to hold suspects without charge for up to a week and gives them unlimited powers of stop and search. In 1986, a total of 59,481 people were stopped and searched at British ports. Since the law was enacted, more than 10,500 people have been detained under its provisions. In the six counties of Northern Ireland only one-third were charged and in Britain only 8 percent. Only a small percentage of these are then actually found guilty.

"The democratic rights of gays are also coming up for attack," Grogan said. "This is partly being fostered around the AIDS issue as in other imperialist countries. But in addition there is a particularly dangerous piece of legislation being promoted by the Tories under an innocuous-sounding law concerned with local council financing." This bill proposes to remove financial support from anything that allegedly "promotes homosexuality," he said.

"Not only is this bill a frontal assault on homosexuals," Grogan said, "but its provisions could be used to limit the books libraries can stock, the plays subsidized theaters can stage, and so on. As a result a wide protest movement is developing."

"Attacks on democratic rights don't stop there," Grogan continued. "Special attention is given to repressing Blacks, particularly those communities which have put up some resistance — like Broadwater Farm [the name of a housing district] in London and the St. Paul's District in Bristol."

"After years of police harassment in Broadwater Farm," Grogan said, "the community residents conducted a mass revolt as they attempted to defend themselves against police assaults. One policeman was killed. As a result 63 people were charged with riot and affray and three given life sentences for allegedly murdering the policeman."

Amnesty International has backed claims by the community that people had been forced into making confessions and that some of those jailed were "political prisoners," Grogan said. This sort of attack on the Black community, he said, "is combined with attempts to terrorize foreign-born workers who come to Britain for work, particularly through the use of immigration controls."

The basic aim, he said, is not to stop workers coming into Britain but to create a pool of superexploited workers to divide the working class and help drive down the value of labor power as a whole.

"The Labour Party opposition has opposed the government on some of these gross attacks on democratic rights," Grogan noted. "But the Labour leadership has been hostile to mobilizing any protests."

Indeed, he noted that "while some Labour Party MPs [Members of Parliament] have spoken out against the government's actions in the Wright affair, the top leadership, headed by Neil Kinnock, has backed the government on this."

During the discussion at the conference several participants referred to recent attacks on abortion rights in Britain. David Alton MP has introduced a bill that aims to fix at 18 weeks the upper limit by which a woman can get a legal abortion.

The bill is scheduled to be taken up in Parliament March 19. A massive demonstration has been scheduled for that date. Grogan said that members of the Communist League are joining many other organizations to help organize support for that action.

Promoting Pathfinder literature

Grogan outlined a series of proposals aimed at deepening the Communist League's base in the industrial working class and increasing its discussions and collaboration with other revolutionists and communists internationally.

He proposed that the organization step up promotion and distribution of Pathfinder books and pamphlets throughout the British Isles.

During the discussion, delegates explained that the success of the London meeting in December to launch the book of writings by Che Guevara had shown the possibilities that exist in promoting Pathfinder books. This meeting of more than 300 had a broad range of speakers, including Oscar Fernández Mell, Cuban ambassador to Britain; Bience Gawanas, South West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO) of Namibia; Jorge López Suazo, Sandinista National Liberation Front of Nicaragua; and George Johannes, African National Congress of South Africa.

"Through this activity we can meet and discuss with a

Continued on next page

Continued from previous page

lot of revolutionists, we can get the ideas of revolutionary leaders such as Fidel Castro, Che Guevara, Malcolm X, and Nelson Mandela into the hands of many people," Grogan said.

Grogan also described the perspectives for selling the *Militant* newspaper and the Spanish-language monthly *Perspectiva Mundial*, published in the United States, and *New International*. He explained that the Communist League is not publishing a paper of its own at this time and will go through a series of experiences in the next months before launching one around a convention at the end of the year.

Meanwhile, "We are integrating sales of the *Militant* into our political work here," he said. "Having a weekly publication to sell is essential to the weekly rhythm of the work of a workers' party."

Most of the participants at the conference had already had some experience in selling the *Militant* and recounted their achievements and some of the problems they have encountered.

Grogan reported that last September there were 75 *Militant* subscribers in Britain and 70 to 80 single copies were sold every week. As a result of sales efforts, he said, by December the number of subscribers had been increased by 118 and weekly sales were some 120 copies.

Grogan also reported that during the same period, 300 to 400 copies of the latest issue of *New International* were sold.

One of the weaknesses of the sales effort in the fall, he said, "was not making sales of *New International* and *PM* more of a central part of our sales."

Delegates expressed enthusiasm for a proposed three-phase campaign for sales of the publications. From January to March a drive was projected to increase weekly single-copy sales of the *Militant* to 300, of *PM* to 25, and to sell 50 copies of *New International*.

A written report adopted by the conference stated, "We must now take the sales of the *Militant* beyond primarily sales to contacts and at special events to be our weekly press, at the heart of everything that we are doing — sold at the center of our literature tables, at workplaces, key public events, and in the labor movement."

The second phase will be a two-week effort in early March to get *Militant* subscribers to renew their subscriptions. The goal is to visit all 118 readers who bought subscriptions in the fall.

The third phase will be a combined subscriptions and

sales campaign of all three publications from March 20 to mid-June. Goals will be adopted by the end of February.

An indication of the good prospects for sales was shown two days after the conference at a demonstration of 300 against U.S. contra aid at the U.S. embassy. Sixty-four copies of the *Militant* and 20 copies of *PM* were sold. Twenty pamphlets on the Palestinian struggle and the Nicaraguan revolution were sold as well.

Several participants at the conference reported they had found that the *Militant* was attractive to many workers and students because it was a working-class paper with an internationalist perspective. Moreover, the fact that it is put out in the United States by communists active in the labor movement is an added attraction to workers in Britain who want to learn more about the class struggle in the United States.

Grogan also explained that steps were being taken to organize more systematic coverage of politics in Britain for the *Militant*.

Grogan proposed that the membership, previously organized in 19 branches, consolidate its forces into five. As part of this projection, he indicated that branches would be encouraged to support and help build twice-monthly New International public forums.

Grogan especially stressed the importance of consolidating "all our forces in London into a single branch." London, he said, has often been seen by most people in the left as a problem, not as an asset, in building a party in Britain.

"But London has by far the largest concentration of workers in Britain, and it's the political center of the country. It is also an important international center," he noted.

Grogan added that London also has the largest concentration of immigrant workers in Britain.

He said most of the estimated 30,000 Colombians and 25,000 Filipinos in Britain live in London. Moreover, there are tens of thousands of Indian, Bengali, Pakistani, West Indian, and African workers. "To go deeper into the working class, we must orient more to these especially oppressed and discriminated sectors of the class," he said.

In the interview following the conference, Grogan stated that the government is tightening the screws against immigrant workers, particularly undocumented workers. He said that at one time, all education had been free in Britain for students coming from Commonwealth countries. But 10 years ago they began eliminating this.

Just recently, he said, police swooped down on a busi-

ness school in London with many students from the semi-colonial countries and charged the officials with violating the immigration laws.

"Our members in engineering plants in North London," Grogan said, "reported two instances in the past couple of months where management called a passport check of the workers. And in rail, just before Christmas, a worker who has been in this country for at least a decade was unceremoniously hauled off by the cops, put in prison, and deportation proceedings started against him."

Grogan also cited the case of several thousand political refugees from Sri Lanka who were prevented entry into the country last year. Instead of admitting them, the government rented a car ferry and used it as a floating prison in the Thames River. "Some of the exiles have been deported," he said. "But others are still incarcerated on this ferry."

Grogan indicated that the Communist League is focusing on being part of four industrial unions — coal miners, engineering (machinists), rail, and telecommunications. He said one of the challenges ahead was to take steps to get work in these unions better organized nationally.

He noted the importance of the Rail Against Apartheid group inside the rail union as a national arena of activity.

Grogan reported that in the past few months participants at the conference had gone to Burkina Faso for an anti-apartheid conference just before President Thomas Sankara's government was overthrown, and to Tanzania for a conference of the African National Congress. He said, "We want to increase these kinds of trips. We also want to encourage members and supporters to go on brigades to Cuba and Nicaragua," he said.

Grogan said that the promotion and sales of Pathfinder literature and the *Militant*, and the attracting of new people, will get a boost with the setting up of a Pathfinder Bookshop in London in the next few months. "This shop will carry all the Pathfinder titles as well as literature of interest to revolutionary-minded people." The shop will also carry titles in Spanish, he said.

A £20,000 (US\$35,000) drive has been launched to help raise funds to set up the bookshop. Grogan said they were also hoping to get volunteers from other countries to come help construct the bookshop.

"Can't you sell a British paper?"

LONDON — The newspapers and televisions here are filled with the appeal: protect *British* industry and agriculture, that's the way to save jobs and help farmers. It's the same chorus one hears in New York, Paris, and Tokyo. And in all cases it's the interests of big industrialists and capitalist farmers that are to be protected.

Working people are urged to view themselves as part of an "us" with the employers — an "us" with mutual interests that need protection from people in other countries. These alleged common interests are wrapped in the British, American, French, Japanese, or other imperialist flags, or under the banner of the European Common Market (EEC).

The labor officialdom in Britain, like its counterpart in the United States, promotes to one degree or another this protection of "national" industry. Unfortunately this gets an echo among many workers.

Workers who accept this outlook are blocked from seeing themselves as part of a common class with workers in other countries. They aren't able to recognize that our common exploitation by the capitalists is far more decisive for defining who we are, what we are capable of, and what we must do to protect our interests as workers than the piece of geography where we live and work.

It was good news then to learn that a banner exclaiming, "We're 'Brits' not 'Nips'" put up by a few workers at Ford's Dagenham plant during the strike this month was soon taken down on the demand of a large number of workers.


This repudiation of anti-Japanese attitudes points toward the kind of international solidarity among workers that is necessary.

Not so heartening, however, was the report from a February meeting in solidarity with the nurses and other health workers fighting attacks against the National Health Service.

As several people sold the *Militant*, which is published in New York, a handful of people selling another paper taunted, "Why are you selling an American paper?" and "Can't you sell a British paper?" It was even more disappointing to learn that they were longtime activists in the far-left in Britain.

As one of the *Militant* salespeople told me later, "They didn't get that the *Militant* isn't an American paper, it's a working-class weekly with an internationalist perspective. And that, in fact, one of its main attractions to workers in Britain is that they can learn about the struggle of fellow workers in the United States."

He said that on that same day nearly 100 *Militants* had been sold to striking hospital workers and protesters against U.S. aid to the Nicaraguan contras. —D.J.



"The 50-year Domestic Contra Operation"

By Larry Seigle

How the U.S. government has concentrated ever more police powers into its hands to attack trade unionists, Black-rights fighters, and other foes of government policy.

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Racist kidnapping, rape spur outcry

N.Y. officials, cops resist serious investigation of Brawley case

BY SAM MANUEL

NEW YORK — The abduction, beating, and rape of 15-year-old Tawana Brawley in the upstate New York town of Wappingers Falls has drawn angry protests in the area.

Brawley, who is Black, was found on Nov. 28, 1987, in back of an apartment complex near her home, beaten, partially naked, and wrapped inside a plastic bag.

She had been abducted four days earlier by two white men in a car, one of whom claimed to be a police officer.

On the day she was abducted, Brawley and a friend from nearby Newburgh had gone to the Orange County jail in Goshen. They visited the friend's younger brother. Two days earlier Black and Latino inmates had organized a protest against conditions in the prison. In response they were beaten by prison guards who dressed themselves in Ku Klux Klan-styled white sheets.

Brawley returned to Newburgh with her friend and took a bus to Wappingers Falls. She got off the bus and was walking home. About a half mile from her house a dark green car pulled in front of her. A man got out of the back seat of the car and dragged Brawley in by her hair. When she screamed for help, the man told her to shut up, saying, "I am a police officer."

Brawley's abductors drove her to a wooded area where four other men were waiting. Over the next three and a half days Brawley was repeatedly raped, sodomized, and beaten by the six.

Patches of Brawley's hair had been both cut and pulled from her head. Human excrement had been rubbed into her remaining hair and on her body. The word "nigger" had been written on her stomach and the letters "KKK" across her chest with a marker. She was unable to walk.

When two white police officers attempted to question Brawley at the hospital where she had been taken, her mother reported she "almost jumped off the table" in panic. One of the cops is said to have remarked, "What's the matter? Are you still mad at me?" implying that he had participated in the rape and beating of Brawley.

Authorities skirt investigation

From the start police and government officials showed no interest in seriously investigating the case.

Twenty-four hours after Brawley's disappearance, her aunt attempted to file a missing-person report with the Newburgh police. She was told that the report had to be filed in Brawley's place of residence.

When she and the young woman's mother, Glenda Brawley, attempted to file a report with the Wappingers Falls police, they were told they must go to the Newburgh cops. The Wappingers Falls cops fi-

nally took a report on the afternoon of November 28. Brawley had been found by a sheriff's deputy 17 minutes earlier.

Following an examination at the hospital, Glenda Brawley was told semen had been found on her daughter's body and that there was evidence of at least attempted rape. Two days later the Wappingers Falls cops stated there was "no evidence the girl was molested."

The Brawley family's attorney, Alton Maddox, charged that local authorities could not be trusted to prosecute the case and advised the family to refuse to cooperate with the investigation. He demanded that Gov. Mario Cuomo appoint a special state prosecutor for the case.

Cuomo initially resisted, stating that to appoint a special prosecutor would supersede the jurisdiction of the local district attorney without cause.

Cuomo conceded and appointed New York State Attorney General Robert Abrams as special prosecutor when both Dutchess County District Attorney William Grady and a court-appointed local prosecutor, David Sall, asked to be removed from the case due to "conflict of interest" in their offices.

Grady is reported to have removed himself because one of his assistants was a close friend of a police officer who committed suicide four days after Brawley was found. A suicide note left by the cop, Harry Crist, has been taken by authorities as evidence in the Brawley case.

Speaking before 100 people at a meeting of the Ossining chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, Maddox stated further that his client would not cooperate with Abrams until arrests were made. "Everybody in Wappingers Falls knows who did it — even I know who did it," Maddox stated. Brawley's attorney has declined thus far to reveal the name of the suspect, saying he is concerned that doing so could compromise the investigation.

On February 11 Maddox announced that he and the Brawley family would cooperate in the investigation since they had received a promise that Abrams would be personally involved in directing it. Since then, the agreement has broken down.

Confidence that Abrams will take the Brawley case seriously was further undermined when a copy of a 200-page transcript of grand jury testimony in the case was stolen from the printshop of his Manhattan office. The transcript was taken by a printing machine operator who worked in the office. Abrams maintained, "This does not compromise the investigation."

Congressional hearings

A House of Representatives committee is slated to hold hearings sometime in



Militant/David Rosenfeld
December 1987 antiracist demonstration in Newburgh, New York, helped bring public attention to racist brutalization of young Tawana Brawley.

March on racially motivated and antigay crimes in the United States.

The decision to initiate the hearings was sparked by the Brawley case as well as other incidents of violent attacks on Blacks by white thugs and killer cops over the last year.

The most prominent case was a lynching in Howard Beach, Queens, a mostly white section of New York. On Dec. 19, 1986, three Blacks were attacked by a mob of white youths. One of the Blacks was killed.

Three of the four young whites accused of participating in the Howard Beach attack were convicted on Dec. 21, 1987, of second-degree manslaughter and assault. One was acquitted of all charges.

Jon Lester was sentenced to 10 to 30 years imprisonment. Scott Kern and Jason Ladone were sentenced to 6 to 18 and 5 to 15 years in jail respectively. Kern and Ladone have since been released on bail pending their appeals.

The congressional hearings have the potential to become a focal point for protests against this and the many incidents of attacks on Blacks by racist mobs and killer cops. In New York these include:

- Ganson Chambers, a Black housing patrol officer, was beaten by white thugs in Williamsburg, Brooklyn, on Dec. 6, 1987, when he attempted to stop them from beating a 63-year-old man. Chambers is partially paralyzed as a result of his injuries.

- Two cops from the 106th police precinct in Queens are currently on trial for torturing Everton Evelyn. Evelyn was beaten and tortured with a "stun gun," which gives a severe electrical shock when applied to a person's body.

- Steven and Sylvester LaMont were attacked by up to 10 young white thugs in the Bensonhurst section of Brooklyn in December 1987. Their attackers yelled "This is our Howard Beach!"

- Yvonne Smallwood, a nurse, died in police custody six days after she was arrested and beaten by cops.

- In December 1984 subway vigilante Bernhard Goetz shot four Black youths in cold blood, paralyzing one for life. Goetz was convicted of gun possession and sentenced to six months.

- Eleanor Bumpurs, 66 years old, was killed in 1984 when a cop fired two shotgun blasts into her.

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Nat'l student conference hears strikers, international guests

BY GREG McCARTAN

NEW BRUNSWICK, N.J. — Some 600 students from more than a hundred colleges, along with 200 observers, gathered at Rutgers University February 5-7 for the National Student Convention '88.

The convention's purpose was to establish a new national student organization, which convention organizers described as a "unified voice of the student left."

Phillip Hostak from the University of Texas at Austin said he was "attracted by the possibility of developing a national framework of common cooperation."

A group of high school students from Summit, New Jersey, who are active in support of the homeless and in opposition to U.S. intervention in Central America said they came to the convention "because we could learn a lot about different issues and see if we could start a national student movement."

Students from the General Union of Palestinian Students and from South Korea, El Salvador, and Nicaragua were warmly received by participants. They described popular struggles in their countries and

explained, as the student from South Korea said, that "your struggle is our struggle, and our struggle is your struggle. We are all fighting against oppression and exploitation all over the world."

Paperworkers on strike against International Paper in Lock Haven, Pennsylvania, also addressed the convention, and a collection was taken to support the strike.

Convention delegates decided to postpone adoption of a constitution or name for the organization. Over the next few months some regional areas projected building nationally coordinated local protest actions on April 4 against apartheid and racism, and three days of action April 23-25 against the CIA to "stop the war at home and abroad."

The Young Socialist Alliance was among the many organizations with a literature table at the convention. Students bought more than \$200 worth of Pathfinder books on Malcolm X, Nicaragua, South Africa, and the history of labor struggles in the United States from the YSA's table. Fifteen subscriptions to the *Militant* were sold.

L.A. rally hits threat to deport 8 for ideas

BY PAT NIXON

LOS ANGELES — More than 400 people rallied here January 26 to demand the U.S. government drop all charges against the Los Angeles Eight and to mark the first anniversary of the arrest of the Palestinian rights activists.

Exactly one year ago, more than 100 armed agents from the FBI and Immigration and Naturalization Service, along with local police, rounded up six Palestinians and the Kenyan wife of one of them. Another Palestinian was arrested three weeks later.

They were initially charged under the 1952 McCarran-Walter Act, which makes it a deportable offense to be a member of or affiliated with an organization that distributes literature advocating "worldwide communism." U.S. Attorney General Edwin Meese personally supervised the prosecution of the eight.

As of today, actual deportation hearings have not even begun, and the case is on appeal in the courts on the issue of government misconduct.

Over half of the crowd at the protest event were Palestinians or other Arab-Americans. Also present were antiwar activists, Hollywood personalities, and members of the Venceremos Brigade, National Lawyers Guild, and American Civil Liberties Union.

National radio personality Casey Kasem emceed the event. Speakers included Robert Farrell, Los Angeles City Councilman; and Father Luis Olivares of La Placita Church, a sanctuary for Salvadoran refugees.

Ramsey Clark, former U.S. attorney general and attorney in the case, gave the keynote address. He condemned Washington's attempt to "deprive us of what these people had to say. We need to know that Palestinian is not a synonym for terror. We must recognize that terror is being committed by governments like South Africa, by the contras, and Jonas Savimbi," referring to the key leader of the U.S.-backed rightists fighting the Angolan government.

Entertainment was provided by Sannine, a popular Arab band. "The Battle of Los Angeles," a play about the case, was performed by the "McCarran Actors Guild."

Khader Hamide, one of the L.A. Eight, read a statement on behalf of the defendants. He explained that they still face a vigorous attempt on the part of the U.S. administration to deport them for their ideas.

Charging that the administration is trying to suppress the Palestinian voice, Hamide talked about the current Palestinian uprising in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. "The children of Gaza are fighting for civil rights, for better housing and health care, and for human rights," he said. "That's what we want to speak about."

"We will continue to fight to make sure a precedent won't be set," Hamide continued, explaining that they were fighting also on behalf of the people of South Africa, El Salvador, Guatemala, and of the United States. "Today, it's the Palestinians, and who knows who would be next. As we eight here are asking for justice, so are our people asking for justice."



Militant/Nelson Blackstock
Julie Nyungugi Mungai, with attorney Leonard Weinglass, right, after 1987 hearing on move to deport her. In row behind her from left are four others of Los Angeles Eight: Naim Sharif, Amjad Obeid, Aiad Barakat, and Bashar Amer.

Shultz trip seeks way to quell Palestinian struggle

Continued from front page
thing, grown worse.

In the West Bank town of Ramallah, a soldier shot a fleeing youth in the head. Friends rushed him to the hospital where a surgeon tried to save his life. But the doctor collapsed and had to be revived when Israeli soldiers fired tear gas into the hospital. The youth died.

The director of the hospital told reporters that there had been no real chance of saving the youth because the top front of his head had been blown off.

Two tear gas canisters — a virulent type marked "for outdoor use only" — were fired into the maternity ward of the hospital.

Markings on the canisters indicated they were made in Pennsylvania.

In East Jerusalem, the Palestinian section of the capital city of Jerusalem, cops struck at the Shuafat refugee center in two raids.

Up to 30 residents were beaten and at least four had to be hospitalized, a doctor said.

United Nations officials charged February 21 that in addition to the beatings, the cops destroyed personal possessions in at least 52 Palestinian homes.

They smashed windows and furniture, and even destroyed rooftop solar heaters and water tanks.

In January, at the same refugee center, police conducted a mass roundup of male residents. UN officials said that 50 people

had to be treated for injuries, including an 18-month-old baby who required four stitches to her head.

The Palestinian resistance within Jerusalem has clearly reached the point where the local cops can't cope with it.

From the outset of the protest, Palestinian merchants in the city have joined in by shuttering their windows.

In December, defiant Palestinian youth threw up flaming street barricades and smashed the windows of four Israeli banks.

On January 15, in a move that deepened Palestinian fury, cops invaded the Dome of the Rock and Al Aqsa mosques, tear-gassing and clubbing participants in prayer services.

On January 19, the Jerusalem police were authorized to impose emergency rule within the city. This even though East Jerusalem was formally annexed to Israel in 1980, and its Palestinian residents are, theoretically, Israeli citizens.

On February 20, it was reported that additional cops are being brought into Jerusalem from all over Israel.

The normal police force there is about 1,000. An additional 1,500 are reported being sent in. The police commissioner said one reason for beefing up the force was to prevent demonstrations during the Shultz visit.

And, as Israel prepared to greet the U.S. "peacemaker," the army ordered 10,000 more riot clubs.

McDonnell Douglas pact ratified

BY DEAN DENNO

LONG BEACH, Calif. — United Auto Workers union members working for McDonnell Douglas Corp. ratified a new four-and-a-half year contract in December. The pact covers 10,000 members of UAW Local 148 at the Douglas plant in Long Beach, and about 1,000 in three small locals in Oklahoma and Arkansas.

The new contract undercuts workers' solidarity and united action in several ways. It will expire in March 1991 — 17 months after the expiration of International Association of Machinists contracts covering 5,000 workers at other McDonnell Douglas plants in Southern California. Previously, the expiration dates were a week apart. The new contract also expires 10 months after IAM contracts covering workers at McDonnell Douglas' main plants in St. Louis.

Another serious setback is the failure to win reinstatement of 17 workers, including Local 148 President Bob Berghoff and other officers, who were fired for contract-related union activities last June. Berghoff had led a work-to-rule campaign to protest the company's concessions demand.

Other new takebacks in the agreement include doing work out of job classification, 90-day probation for new hires, election of lead workers in place of determination by seniority, and forcing workers to pay part of the premiums for health-care coverage. Most of these conditions were already implemented by the company in March 1987.

The contract also contains several takebacks imposed by the company after the defeat of Local 148's 17-week strike in 1983-84. The two-tier wage system is continued

and deepened by further cuts in the starting pay rates for most classifications. Delayed cost-of-living provisions for new hires remain, and the contract contains general pay raises for only three of its five years.

Local 148 is under the direct control of the UAW International. International officials removed all local officers after an aborted union election in May 1987. Elections for new officers were conducted by the U.S. Department of Labor in August and September, but the winners had not yet taken office in December.

The International representatives, who are still running Local 148, never revealed that they were conducting contract negotiations with the company. An agreement was announced December 16, and the vote scheduled for a few days later. The text of the contract was available only the day before the vote. Given the complexity of the contract and the company's previous offers, it was impossible for workers to know exactly what we were voting on. No meeting was held for membership discussion of the contract.

The majority of workers were tired of the uncertainties created by working without a contract since December 1986. However, 42 percent of the 8,555 workers who voted at Long Beach voted no, in spite of a \$200 signing bonus. In the absence of a leadership with a perspective for resisting the company's demands, the no vote was basically a protest against contract terms already implemented, and against the UAW International's heavy-handed intervention.

Dean Denno is a member of UAW Local 148 at McDonnell Douglas, Long Beach.

Wichita meat-packers end walkout

BY RAÚL GONZÁLEZ

WICHITA, Kan. — Meat-packers at Excel's plant here voted to return to work on January 25, ending a one-week strike. The union will continue to negotiate a new contract with the company.

Members of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 340 were forced to strike when the company broke off negotiations January 15. Workers interviewed on the picket line said the company had refused to grant 45 cents an hour in wage raises over the next three years.

Base pay at the plant is \$7.85 an hour. Each labor grade above the base rate receives an additional 15 cents an hour.

The workers had been forced to give up

close to \$2 an hour in 1982 and 1983 negotiations. "Today I'm still not making what I was five years ago," Bill, a union member, explained.

Excel is owned by Cargill, one of the world's largest grain-trading monopolies.

During the strike, Excel workers received support from other union meat-packers in the area. They also talked to truck drivers and rail workers about supporting their struggle.

Kansas is a "right-to-work" state, so not all workers at Excel are members of the union. More than 550 workers went out on strike; about 125 to 150 stayed on the job during the walkout.

U.S. seeks aid in ousting Noriega

Continued from front page

the indictments dropped against Noriega if he left the country."

On February 23, the State Department recommended that Reagan penalize Panama for failing to take adequate steps to control drug trafficking.

The February 15 *Miami Herald* reported that one of those indicted, Amed Dario Paredes, is expected to turn himself in to U.S. authorities. A U.S. student at Florida International University, who is also charged in the indictments, surrendered in Miami on February 8. He pleaded not guilty.

Noriega has charged that what is really behind the indictments and the campaign against Panama is the refusal of the Panamanian government to give full backing to U.S. policy in the Central American region. Panama has been a member of the Contadora group of Latin American governments, which sought to negotiate an end to the U.S.-backed contra war against Nicaragua. Panama also has relations with Cuba.

The indictments smeared Cuban Presi-

dent Fidel Castro, charging that he is involved in drug trafficking. Justice Department officials have added that no formal charge was made against Castro for "lack of information."

Hearings on the indictments have revealed further details of the U.S. administration's role in arming Nicaraguan counterrevolutionary bands. Reagan's former national security advisor, John Poindexter, visited Noriega in December 1985 to seek Panama's aid in bringing down the Nicaraguan government. Poindexter also traveled to Honduras to convince that government to lift a blockade on a shipment of arms to the contras.

A central aim of Washington's attacks on the Panamanian government is to undermine a set of treaties signed by former president James Carter in 1977.

The treaties would give Panama sovereignty over the Panama Canal on Dec. 31, 1999. The U.S. military's Southern Command and 10,000 troops are headquartered in Panama. It is the Pentagon's nerve center for directing the contra war against Nicaragua and the activities of U.S. military forces throughout Central America.

Report from Aurora: Philippine peasants hit by army repression

Continued from front page

that a number of NPA fighters had been killed in clashes in the Dinalungan municipality. But refugees from the area insisted that most of the dead were peasants who had been dragged from their beds and murdered by the military. The TFDP planned to hear testimony from these refugees now in Baler and then to visit the area under military occupation 60 miles to the northeast.

While the visit to Dinalungan had to be called off because of military activity, I was able to speak with a number of victims of military harassment in that municipality as well as the head of an investigating team sent to the area by the provincial governor.

Aurora is a remote, impoverished sub-province on the east coast of the central Luzon region that borders Isabela, one of the original centers of the NPA guerrilla struggle. It can only be reached by a grueling eight or nine hour bus ride from Manila that takes one over the precipitous Sierra Madre mountain range on a narrow, winding shingle road.

At the top of the mountain road, buses are stopped by a military roadblock. All male passengers have to evacuate the bus while it is searched by soldiers. From that point on, military checkpoints and encampments are numerous.

Much of the Sierra Madre is a national park, with signs like "Take me with your camera, please don't cut me." The evidence of logging was everywhere. These are legal and tax-free logging operations and closely connected to the military, I was told, who collect large bribes at the checkpoints in return for allowing the logging trucks to pass through.

Baler

Baler itself is a depressed and rundown town with almost no infrastructure. There was one public long distance telephone station, the only telephone in the entire province, I was told.

The one functioning hospital in the province was a ramshackle wooden building

surrounded by small stores selling drugs that patients must purchase for their treatments.

There is no industry in the province. More than 80 percent of the 100,000-odd population makes its living as small fishermen and farmers producing rice, copra, coffee, and vegetables. Because their plots are so small, many have to earn additional income cutting timber in the national park or working as casual agricultural laborers.

There are some big landowners in the province. For instance, the descendants of Manuel Quezon, who was president of the Philippines under U.S. colonial rule, reportedly own 17,000 acres of mature coconut plantations.

But in Dinalungan, the land is mostly public land controlled by the Department of Natural Resources. The peasants grow rice and vegetables on small plots, mostly as squatters without legal titles. Almost 90 percent of Dinalungan's population live beneath the poverty line, a local church worker said.

A major land conflict developed in Dinalungan when the government leased almost 400 acres of land in the area to a rancher, Frederico Palmero, almost half of which was already being tilled by local families. In addition, Palmero denied other families the right to cross this land to reach their plots to cultivate their crops.

Peasants fight for rights

Under these conditions, the peasants began to organize themselves to fight for their rights, linking up with the Peasant Movement of the Philippines (KMP) when it was formed in 1985. Women's and youth organizations were also formed. One source of initiative in this organizing came from Dinalungan students studying at the college in Baler run by nuns from the Catholic order of Mount Carmel, some of whom joined the anti-imperialist League of Filipino Students.

But much of this organizing was centered in the church in Dinalungan, led by nuns who had been functioning there since 1980. The nuns organized the people into a

basic health program, a credit union, and a consumer's cooperative operating out of the church compound, one of the sisters involved told me. A community center was built in this church compound, where a peasant union and other local "cause oriented" groups met, she said.

The military had tried to intimidate the organizers of these projects previously, but it was not until January, when the 56th Infantry Brigade was moved into the province, that a full-scale military campaign was unleashed upon them. This was shortly before the January 18 elections across the Philippines for new provincial and municipal governments. Some of the local activists were running for the Dinalungan council.

Terror campaign unleashed

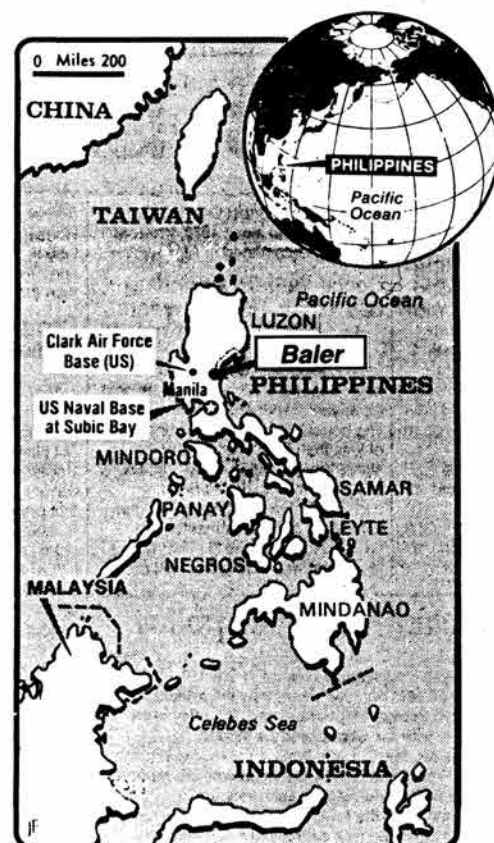
On January 15 a shootout took place in the town between soldiers and armed men traveling in logging trucks passing through the town. A civilian drinking in a soldier's house died in the crossfire. The army said those in the logging truck were NPA members.

The next day, soldiers surrounded the church compound, claiming that the shooting had come from there the day before. They broke into the church building, falsely claiming to have found rifles and ammunition for the NPA, and "subversive" documents.

That same morning, some of the families going to the fields saw soldiers entering one of the small villages within the Dinalungan municipality, along with a logging truck carrying two drums of gasoline. Seven houses were burnt to the ground. The witnesses fled.

On the evening of January 23, a couple was wounded when their house was strafed by bullets.

Three nights later, in a neighboring village, five people were dragged from their beds by men in civilian clothes and shot to death. A witness who narrowly escaped being shot himself said he saw the killers walking back toward the military encampment where they were later seen drinking.



As a result of this terror campaign, the nuns, priests, and almost 300 families fled the districts, many making their way to Baler.

One witness explained that she left after the newly elected mayor of Dinalungan, the wife of one of the military men, was reported as saying that the only way to bring peace to the town was to kill all the "subversives." A relative of the witness who had been elected to the council, warned her that the army had a hit list of 100 "suspected subversives" and that she was on it. All those killed were on the list, she added.

Refugees

The terror followed the refugees to Baler, however. Roberto Rivas, a 22-year-old Dinalungan student at Mount Carmel college, was shot dead February 11 as he walked home from his night classes. Rivas, who had been a candidate in the Dinalungan council elections, was the secretary general of the provincial Bayan chapter and coordinator of the League of Filipino Students at the college. He was centrally involved in organizing to bring the fact-finding commission to Aurora.

Other key witnesses had taken refuge in the college or fled to Manila after soldiers began harassing them in Baler.

The account of the refugees was essentially backed up by Rodante Rubio, a newly elected member of the provincial legislature. Rubio had been sent to Dinalungan in early February by the governor to investigate the allegations of the refugees.

When he arrived, Rubio said, Dinalungan was occupied by hundreds of soldiers from the 56th Infantry Battalion. But, he said, it was not a war zone. There was no fighting going on.

The military would not allow him to visit the villages where the massacre and arson had taken place, telling him that the NPA had barricades across the roads and he would get shot. The only people he could talk to repeated the army's demand for more troops to be sent to the town.

Rubio said that he saw the massive military buildup and harassment in Dinalungan as flowing from Ramcs' policy of defeating the guerrillas by crushing the "communist fronts." He said a soldier had confirmed for him the existence of a hit list in the town. Almost all those killed were activists in the KMP peasant organization, he pointed out.

Rubio also expressed concern that several political activists were being detained illegally by the military in Aurora.

Rene Triunfante, for example, a 20-year-old student activist and son of the Aurora KMP chairperson, was arrested Oct. 27, 1987, and held without charges, until finally, on February 15, frame-up robbery charges were filed against him. No lawyer could be found in the province who would petition the courts for the release of those illegally detained.

The fact-finding commission asked Eddie Ong, the Aurora vice-governor, why there were illegal detentions of activists and military abusers of human rights walking the town scott free. Ong claimed his government was powerless to do anything. "We cannot arrest them. We are depending on the military to do that."

Murderers of union leader still at large

BY DEB SHNOOKAL

MANILA, Philippines — The government of President Corazon Aquino has finally decided to move against the military men responsible for the murder of May 1 Movement chairman Rolando Olalia and his driver Leonor Alay-ay in November 1986. The May 1 Movement (KMU) is the Philippines largest union federation.

Among those charged are air force Lt. Col. Eduardo "Red" Kapunan and navy Capt. Rex Robles, who were top aides to former defense secretary Juan Ponce Enrile. Kapunan and Robles are also central leaders of the Reform Armed Forces Movement (RAM), which, led by Gregorio "Gringo" Honasan, launched last August the most serious attempt to date to overthrow Aquino.

Honasan is now under detention for his role in the attempted coup. Olalia and his driver were kidnapped by armed men after a union meeting in Pasig, Manila. Their mutilated bodies were found the next day with a number of gunshot and stab wounds, their hands bound behind their backs, and mouths gagged with paper.

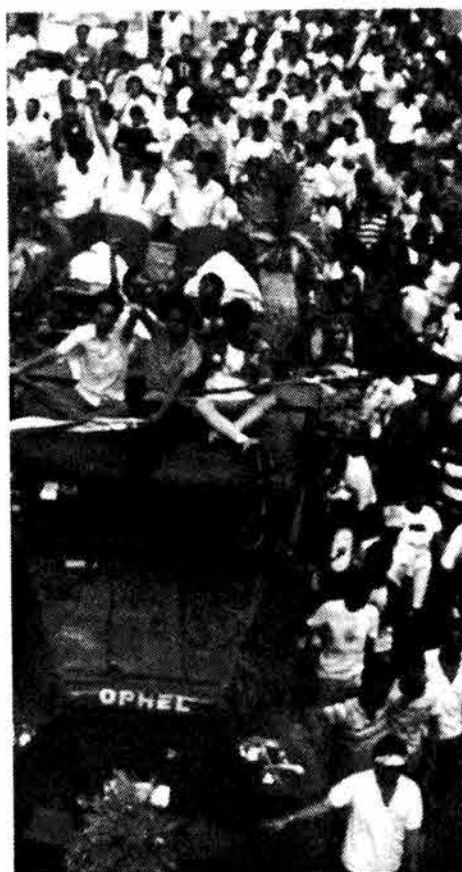
The murders came at a time when then defense secretary Enrile was urging Aquino to crack down harder on workers and peasants struggles, the New People's Army guerrilla movement, and to purge her cabinet of those not to the liking of the military high command. The Enrile group was immediately linked to the assassinations, but no action was taken.

A National Bureau of Investigation task force was established, and a key suspect, Gilberto Galicia, a former Defense Ministry civilian agent, was arrested in December 1986. He was subsequently released due to alleged lack of evidence. A number of other military men also implicated in the murders reportedly went AWOL and have not yet been located.

According to the NBI, Galicia was finally rearrested in Pilar, Abra Province, while he was completing a rattan business deal with local police. Galicia apparently admitted his involvement in the murders and named a number of military personnel, including Kapunan and Robles. Galicia may now become a state witness.

Kapunan and Robles were supposed to be under house arrest in their homes within the compound at Camp Aguinaldo for their part in the August coup attempt.

However, when presented with arrest and detention orders signed by the New Armed Forces chief of staff, Gen. Renato de Villa, Robles simply refused to be arrested. So the arresting officer retreated, reportedly saying he would ask another Philippines Constabulary officer to serve



Hundreds of thousands in Manila protested 1986 murder of union leader Rolando Olalia and his driver.

the arrest order.

Kapunan was "out playing golf" when an attempt was made to arrest him, and he subsequently disappeared for a few days, despite his "house arrest."

The February 22 *Manila Chronicle* reported, "Until late yesterday, ranking military officials avoided newsmen who wanted to know the exact status of Kapunan, Robles, and the other military men linked to the Olalia slaying."

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ALABAMA

Birmingham

Stop the Attacks on the United Mine Workers of America: an Eyewitness Report on the Frame-Up Trial of the Massey Miners. Speaker: Jim Little, *Militant* correspondent at Kentucky trials; John Hawkins, Socialist Workers Party, member UMW Local 2368. Sat., Feb. 27, 7:30 p.m. 1306 1st Ave. N. Donation: \$2.50. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (205) 323-3079.

CALIFORNIA

Oakland

Socialist Educational Weekend on Black History. 1. Forum: "Malcolm X: an Internationalist Revolutionary Leader" Speaker: Cathy Sedwick, Socialist Workers Party, member United Auto Workers at NUMMI. Sat., Feb. 27, 7:30 p.m. 2. Two classes on "The Black Struggle for Equality — 1776 to Today." Speaker: Malik Miah, Socialist Workers Party National Committee. Sun., Feb. 28, 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. 3702 Telegraph Ave. Donation: \$2 each session. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (415) 420-1165.

FLORIDA

Miami

International Women's Day. A panel discussion on the role of women in struggle. Speakers to be announced. Translation to Spanish. Sat., March 5, 7:30 p.m. 137 NE 54th St. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (305) 756-1020.

ILLINOIS

Chicago

Political Rights Defense Fund Rally: Protest FBI Spying. Hear opponents of FBI and government spying speak out on violations of democratic rights. Speakers: Rev. Clyde Brooks, Chicago director, Southern Christian Leadership Conference; William H. Taylor, president, Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers Union Local 7-507; Elías Castro, Hartford 15 defendant, Puerto Rican independence activist framed up by FBI; Héctor Marroquín, labor spokesperson for PRDF; fighting for permanent residence in the United States. Sun., March 6, 5 to 7 p.m. Reception to follow. United Auto Workers Local 477 Hall, 5808 W Chicago Ave. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: PRDF. For more information call (312) 363-7136.

IOWA

Des Moines

Che Guevara and the Cuban Revolution. Ten classes on *Writings and Speeches of Ernesto Che Guevara*. Thursdays beginning February 18. Choice of 12 noon or 6:30 p.m. class. 2105 Forest Ave. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Young Socialist Alliance. For more information call (515) 246-1695.

MARYLAND

Baltimore

The State of Black America. Speaker: Rashaad Ali, Socialist Workers Party National Committee, member United Food and Commercial Workers union Local 27. Sat., Feb. 27, 7:30 p.m. 2913 Greenmount Ave. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (301) 235-0013.

MASSACHUSETTS

Boston

Celebrate International Women's Day: Union Women in Struggle. Speakers: Sharon Gonyea, member United Paperworkers International Union Local 14, on strike against International Paper Co. in Jay, Maine; Betsy Soares, Socialist Workers Party, member United Auto Workers Local 1596; others. Translation to Spanish. Sat., March 5, 7:30 p.m. 605 Mas-

sachusetts Ave. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (617) 247-6772.

Cambridge

International Women's Day: Solidarity Between North American and Central American Women. Speakers: Rosa Carlota Tünnermann, cultural ambassador of Nicaraguan embassy; America Calderón, member of Guatemalan Women's Organization. Thurs., March 3, 7:30 p.m. Kresge Auditorium, M.I.T., 77 Massachusetts Ave. Tickets: \$5. Sponsor: CASA and M.I.T. COCA. For more information call (617) 492-8699.

MICHIGAN

Detroit

Defend Women's Right to Abortion. Speakers: Catalina Hall, member Down River National Organization for Women; Carolyn Peyser, solidarity activist recently returned from Nicaragua; representative of Socialist Workers Party. Translation to Spanish. Sat., March 5, 7:30 p.m. 5019 1/2 Woodward Ave. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (313) 961-0395.

The Detroit Housing Crisis. Speakers: City Councilwoman Maryann Mahaffey; Joe Madison, civil rights activist and chairperson of Michigan Leadership Conference; Lee Griffin, tenant organizer, United Community Housing Coalition; Mo Geary, Socialist Workers Party. Translation to Spanish. Sat., March 12, 7:30 p.m. 5019 1/2 Woodward Ave. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (313) 961-0395.

MINNESOTA

St. Paul

Cuba Today: Eyewitness Report and Slideshow. Speaker: Anne Winkler, Central America solidarity activist. Sat., March 5, 7 p.m. 508 N Snelling Ave. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Forum. For more information call (612) 644-6325.

The Palestinian Upsurge: Eyewitness Account and Panel Discussion. Speakers: Ziad Amra, Palestinian student at University of Minnesota; Argiris Malapanis, Socialist Workers Party; others. Sat., March 12, 7:30 p.m. 508 N Snelling Ave. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Forum. For more information call (612) 644-6325.

MISSOURI

Kansas City

Workers Under Attack: A Report from Meat-Packing. Speakers: Raúl González, Armour worker, Socialist Workers Party; Steve Marshall, Swift plant worker in St. Joseph, member of United Food and Commercial Workers Local P-58, Socialist Workers Party. Translation to Spanish. Sat., Feb. 27, 4 p.m. 4725 Troost. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (816) 753-0224.

St. Louis

Che Guevara and the Cuban Revolution. Translation to Spanish. Sat., Feb. 27, 7 p.m. 4907 Martin Luther King Dr. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (314) 361-0250.

NEBRASKA

Omaha

Cuba Today. An 11-part weekly educational series. Tuesdays at 6:30 p.m. and Saturdays at 2 p.m., through April 16. 140 S 40th St. Donation for series: \$1.50. Sponsor: Young Socialist Alliance, Socialist Workers Party, Pathfinder Bookstore. For more information call (402) 553-0245.

Malcolm X: His Ideas and Their Meaning for Today. Speakers: Alex Thomas, member Youth for Peace; Bill Herndon, member Black

Liberators for Action on Campus, University of Nebraska; Scott Dombeck, Young Socialist Alliance, member Allied Industrial Workers Local 171. Translation to Spanish. Sat., Feb. 27, 7:30 p.m. 140 S 40th St. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (402) 553-0245.

NEW YORK

Manhattan

Bound to Strike Back. A newly released film on the struggle for freedom in South Africa. Features material on African National Congress and United Democratic Front. Speaker: ANC representative. Translation to Spanish. Fri., Feb. 26, 7:30 p.m. 79 Leonard St. Donation: \$3. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum/Foro Perspectiva Mundial. For more information call (212) 226-8445.

Fund Raiser Dance for the New York-Nicaragua Construction Brigade. Sat., Feb. 27, 9 p.m.-2 a.m. Taller Latinoamericano, 63 E 2nd St. Donation: \$7. Cash bar and music by DJ Will K. Wilkins. For more information call (212) 475-7159.

Abortion Rights in Canada: a Victory for Working People. Speaker: Colleen Levi, coordinating committee, Quebec Coalition for Free Abortion on Demand. Translation to Spanish. Fri., March 4, 7:30 p.m. 79 Leonard St., Donation: \$3. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum/Foro Perspectiva Mundial. For more information call (212) 226-8445.

NORTH CAROLINA

Greensboro

South Africa: Unions in the Struggle Against Apartheid. Video presentation of *Adapt or Die*; discussion to follow. Sun., Feb. 28, 7 p.m. 2219 E Market. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (919) 272-5996.

OHIO

Cleveland

The Philippines: Struggle for Land and Democracy. Speakers: Mylon Waite, associate director of Greater Cleveland Interchurch Council, recently returned from the Philippines; Margaret Husk, chairperson, Cleveland Young Socialist Alliance. A video will be shown. Sat., Feb. 27, 7:30 p.m. 2521 Market Ave. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (216) 861-6150.

OREGON

Portland

Malcolm X: El-Hajj Malik el Shabazz. Video showing followed by discussion on the fight against racist attacks today. Sat., Feb. 27, 7:30 p.m. 2732 NE Union. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (503) 287-7416.

PENNSYLVANIA

Philadelphia

Malcolm X: a Panel Discussion. Translation to Spanish. Sat., Feb. 27, 7:30 p.m. 2744 Germantown Ave. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (215) 225-0213.

Pittsburgh

Is Racism on the Rise? — the Fight Against Racist Violence Today. Speakers: Reggie Jackson, Monroeville National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, member United Steelworkers of America Local 1246; Greg Jackson, Socialist Workers Party and steering committee member of the Coalition Against Racist Violence; Mark Collins, Black Action Society, University of Pittsburgh; representative of Rainbow Coalition. Sat., Feb. 27, 7:30 p.m. 4905 Penn Ave. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (412) 362-6767.

International Women's Day 1988: Where Do We Stand in Fight for Abortion Rights?

Speakers: Janet Catov, Pittsburgh organizer of National Abortion Rights Action League; Louise Halverson, Socialist Workers Party; others. Sat., March 5, 7:30 p.m. 4905 Penn Ave. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (412) 362-6767.

UTAH

Salt Lake City

El-Hajj Malik el Shabazz. Video and presentation on revolutionary contribution of Malcolm X. Translation to Spanish. Sat., Feb. 27, 7:30 p.m. 147 E 900 S. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (801) 355-1124.

WASHINGTON

Seattle

Issues in the "Baby M" Case and the Fight for Women's Rights. Speaker: Robbie Scherr, Socialist Workers Party. Sat., Feb. 27, 7:30 p.m. 5517 Rainier Ave. S. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (206) 723-5330.

WASHINGTON, D.C.

The Fight for Freedom in Southern Africa. Speakers: Sam Manuel, *Militant* reporter at the 1987 African National Congress' anti-apartheid conference in Tanzania. Sat., Feb. 27, 7:30 p.m. 3165 Mt. Pleasant NW. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (202) 797-7699.

Winning Democracy in El Salvador. New video by Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador. Discussion to follow with representative of CISPES. Translation to Spanish. Sat., March 5, 7:30 p.m. 3165 Mt. Pleasant NW. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (202) 797-7688.

WEST VIRGINIA

Charleston

U.S. Hands Off Panama! Speaker: Toba Singer, Socialist Workers Party. Sat., March 5, 7 p.m. 116 McFarland St. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (304) 345-3040.

Morgantown

Panama: U.S. Target for Destabilization. Speaker: Doug Hord, Socialist Workers Party, member United Steelworkers of America. Sat., Feb. 27, 7:30 p.m. 221 Pleasant St. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (304) 296-0055.

Malcolm X: His Legacy for Today. Speaker: Greg Jackson, leader of Coalition Against Racist Violence in Pittsburgh, Socialist Workers Party. Film: *El-Hajj Malik el Shabazz*. Sat., March 5, 7:30 p.m. 221 Pleasant St. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (304) 296-0055.

WISCONSIN

Milwaukee

Stop FBI Attacks on Political Rights. Speakers: Héctor Marroquín, Political Rights Defense Fund; Ruth Chojnacki, Milwaukee Sanctuary Coordinating Committee; Bob Clark, regional director, Coalition of Black Trade Unionists; Gil Delgado, board member, Racine-Kenosha Civil Rights Committee, United Auto Workers; Julie Enslow, Mobilization for Survival; Gillam Kerley, executive director, Committee Against Registration and the Draft; Ted Krukowki, president, United Electrical Workers Local 1111; representatives of Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador, General Union of Palestinian Students, Central America Solidarity Coalition. Fri., March 4, Reception, 6:30 p.m.; rally, 7:30 p.m. UE Hall, 939 S 2nd St. Sponsors: PRDF, Mobilization for Survival, Central America Solidarity Coalition. For more information call (414) 263-4368.

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PENNSYLVANIA: Edinboro: YSA, c/o Mark Mateja, Edinboro University of Pa. Zip:

16412. Tel: (814) 398-2754. **Philadelphia:** SWP, YSA, 2744 Germantown Ave. Zip: 19133. Tel: (215) 225-0213. **Pittsburgh:** SWP, YSA, 4905 Penn Ave. Zip: 15224. Tel: (412) 362-6767.

TEXAS: Austin: YSA, c/o Mike Rose, 7409 Berkman Dr. Zip: 78752. Tel: (512) 452-3923. **Houston:** SWP, YSA, 4806 Alameda. Zip: 77004. Tel: (713) 522-8054.

UTAH: Price: SWP, YSA, 23 S. Carbon Ave., Suite 19, P.O. Box 758. Zip: 84501. Tel: (801) 637-6294. **Salt Lake City:** SWP, YSA, 147 E. 900 South. Zip: 84111. Tel: (801) 355-1124.

VIRGINIA: Portsmouth: YSA, P.O. Box 6538, Churchland Station. Zip: 23707.

WASHINGTON, D.C.: SWP, YSA, 3165 Mt. Pleasant St. NW. Zip: 20010. Tel: (202) 797-7699, 797-7021.

WASHINGTON: Seattle: SWP, YSA, 5517 Rainier Ave. South. Zip: 98118. Tel: (206) 723-5330.

WEST VIRGINIA: Charleston: SWP, YSA, 116 McFarland St. Zip: 25301. Tel: (304) 345-3040. **Morgantown:** SWP, YSA, 221 Pleasant St. Zip: 26505. Tel: (304) 296-0055.

WISCONSIN: Milwaukee: SWP, YSA, 4707 W. Lisbon Ave. Zip: 53208. Tel: (414) 445-2076.

Chutzpah award of the week — The Reagan administration offered that if General Noriega left Panama it would kill the U.S. drug indictment against him. The prop-



Harry Ring

osition was delivered to the president of Panama by Elliott Abrams, the State Department chap who's so crooked even Congress won't

deal with him.

Makes ya proud — "This little pineapple had better watch it." — Sen. Alfonse D'Amato responding to General Noriega's call for withdrawal of the U.S. Southern Command from Panama.

O'er the ramparts they watch — One unit of the Panama-based U.S. Southern Command is SWORD. That's short for Small Wars Operational Requirements Division. It studies guerrilla tactics to "detect, deter, and defeat small war threats."

How about a tattoo on his

forehead? — Facing trial in St. Louis on an attempted rape charge, Luis Santos, 19, will appear in court shackled in leg irons. The judge says Santos previously tried to escape and assertedly bears the AIDS virus. He instructed that the leg irons be only "minimally" visible to the jury.

They'll drink to that — San Jose, California, police have billed accused drunk drivers for \$100,000 in the first two weeks of a new program. An amended state law permits cities to recover police, fire, and ambulance costs from drunk drivers — regardless of whether they're convicted.

Practically on welfare — Melridge, an Oregon bulb and flower company, filed for bankruptcy and got an order freezing the assets of company prez George Heublein, suggesting he had been tapping the till. A stern judge limited Heublein to \$2,000 a week for living expenses, plus payments on the house, the Mercedes, the Jaguar, and daughter's tuition.

Pushers don't quit — A newsletter, "Washington Smoker," has a catchy headline, "Smokers work for rights." Partly printed in regular type, mostly neat typewriter script, it looked like the work of a

group of activists with limited resources. We had to look twice to catch the discreet imprint, "A service of Philip Morris USA."

Cultural note — The *New York Times* reported, with a displeased sniff, that one ad agency is peddling space on the walls of toilet stalls. Our own reaction was that Madison Avenue had finally reached its aesthetic level.

Thought for the week — "Studies show that the typical consumer is bombarded by 5,000 advertising messages a day, and the number of ads is expected to increase steadily." — News item.

Behind anti-Panama drive: gov't won't toe U.S. line

Continued from Page 5

der Haig sent a diplomatic note to Torrijos, charging that Panama was being used by the Cubans to send arms and fighters to El Salvador. Then president of Panama Aristides Royo responded, "The only country that has used our territory against our will to interfere in El Salvador is the United States."

In order to establish a popular base, Torrijos initiated a range of social programs. These included a program to provide land

Noriega presents himself as the continuator and defender of Torrijos' ideas and policies. He has ignited Washington's anger by sticking to the enforcement of the 1977 canal treaty and maintaining an independent foreign policy, including friendly relations with Cuba.

Most important, Noriega has refused to fall in behind Washington's efforts to overthrow the Sandinista government of Nicaragua. In December 1985 the White House went as far as dispatching then national security advisor John Poindexter to Panama to try to strong-arm Noriega into changing his position. The February 14 *Miami Herald* cites an earlier interview with Noriega in which he reported that Poindexter tried to enlist his agreement to undermine Nicaragua in the Contadora Group. This was the predecessor of the group of regional governments that signed the Cen-

tral American peace accords last fall. Noriega refused.

Cuban Prime Minister Fidel Castro has described the U.S. campaign against Noriega and Panama as a "dirty war," one which began in earnest in 1986 when the first charges of drug trafficking were raised. Mexico was also a target of drug trafficking charges for not toeing the line on Central America.

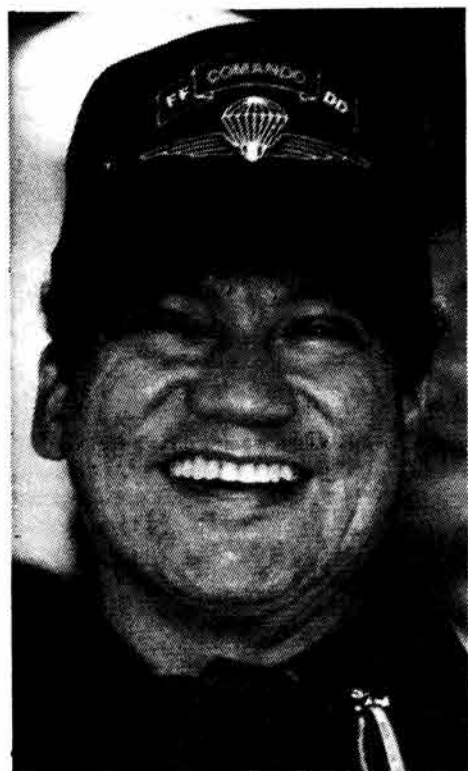
Reactionary demonstrations

During the summer of 1987, the campaign escalated with a series of demonstrations organized by the U.S.-backed National Civic Crusade in Panama. This coalition of anti-Noriega groups is dominated by the Chamber of Commerce, the Catholic church hierarchy, and associations of doctors, dentists, life insurance brokers, real estate dealers, and other professionals and businessmen. This January, the cru-

sade issued a "Proposed Program for a Transition to Democracy" that amounted to a call for the overthrow of the government.

Washington has now upped the ante in its anti-Noriega drive. On top of repeated, open calls for Noriega to step down, the cutoff of U.S. economic and military aid to Panama, and thinly veiled threats of military action, the White House has now added indictments on drug charges, complete with an international slander campaign.

Noriega's response has been to demand that the U.S. military leave Panama now, before their scheduled departure in 1999. "The U.S. military presence here is geared to gain power," Noriega said February 8. "The military presence should be strictly Panamanian. We reject the Southern Command. It constitutes more aggression against Panama."



Gen. Manuel Antonio Noriega

for agrarian cooperatives and the construction of schools and health centers in the countryside and low-income housing in the cities. A labor code containing some safeguards for workers' rights was enacted.

New Panama Canal treaty

The signing of the new Panama Canal Treaty by Torrijos and President James Carter in 1977 was a victory for working people throughout the world, especially in Latin America. The product of decades of struggle, the treaty was reached over the substantial opposition of a section of the U.S. ruling class, lead by Ronald Reagan. Reagan's position was summed up in his 1980 campaign statement, "We bought [the canal], we paid for it, it's ours, and we should tell Torrijos and company that we are going to keep it."

The treaty, which provides for the phased return of the canal and Canal Zone to Panamanian sovereignty by the year 2000, was approved by the Panamanian people in an October 1977 referendum by a 2-to-1 margin. In October 1979, some 250,000 Panamanians surged through the gates of the Canal Zone to celebrate the return of the zone to Panama, as the first phase of the treaty went into effect.

All of these measures — above all the successful negotiation of the new canal treaty — made Torrijos very popular within Panama and throughout Latin America, and very unpopular in Washington.

After Torrijos

As the head of Panama's army, Noriega succeeded Torrijos as the de facto head of state in 1983.

Continued from back page

the morale of their troops. This move signaled a substantial escalation of the war by South Africa. The visit aimed to establish the apartheid regime's open and permanent presence in Angola.

U.S. gov't demands Cuban withdrawal

In addition to aiding the South African-UNITA military attacks on Angola, the U.S. government has also attempted to step up diplomatic pressure on the Luanda government. Washington has said that with-

of tens of thousands of Cuban volunteers. Cuban troops have remained in Angola to help defend its sovereignty.

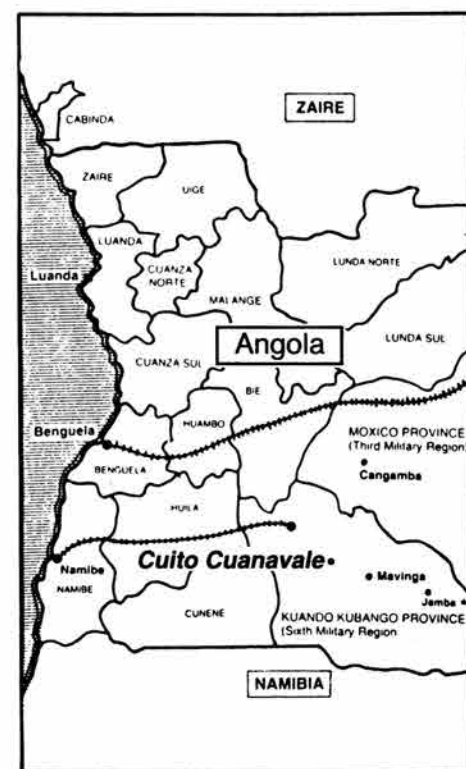
On January 28, U.S. Assistant Secretary for African Affairs Chester Crocker led a delegation of State Department officials to Luanda for discussions on the situation in southern Africa. Following the meeting, the February 2 *Washington Post* reported that both the Cuban and Angolan governments agreed to the withdrawal of all Cuban troops.

In the same article State Department spokesperson Charles Redman said there is "no doubt" that the Angolan-Cuban troop withdrawal offer is "an important step" and "an important missing element" in the negotiations to date.

But Manuel Pacavira, Angolan chief delegate to the United Nations, told the

New York Times February 16, that his government has always agreed that Cuban troops would leave as long as the U.S. and South African governments agreed to stop aiding UNITA, and Pretoria withdrew from Namibia.

A January 29 statement issued by the Angolan Ministry of Foreign Relations stated, "The Angolan side reaffirmed its principled standpoints, that is, withdrawal of the internationalist Cuban forces from Angola is conditional on withdrawal of South African troops from Angolan territory; end of aid to the UNITA puppet gangs by the United States, and the Pretoria regime; implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 435/78 on the independence of Namibia; and respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the People's Republic of Angola."



drawal of South African troops from Angola is dependent on withdrawal of Cuban internationalist fighters from Angola.

Stop aiding UNITA

The governing People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) led a long and successful struggle against Portuguese colonial domination. As the Portuguese prepared to leave in 1975, South Africa invaded Angola. The MPLA government repelled the invasion with the aid

—10 AND 25 YEARS AGO—

THE MILITANT

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE 30c
March 3, 1978

February 22 — Having failed so far in its efforts to intimidate striking coal miners into accepting company demands and returning to work, the administration of President James Carter is trying another strike-breaking tactic: divide and rule.

The February 20 announcement of an agreement between United Mine Workers officials and the Pittsburgh and Midway Coal Co. (P&M) is intended as the opening wedge of a back-to-work movement.

P&M, a Gulf Oil subsidiary, employs some 800 UMW members. It is not part of the Bituminous Coal Operators Association, the main industry bargaining group.

Government mediators reportedly engineered the pact, which the administration then began to push openly as a model for an industrywide settlement.

Although the BCOA turned down the offer, government officials are continuing to pressure individual UMW locals to settle for the P&M terms — while still holding over their heads the threat of a Taft-Hartley injunction or federal seizure of the mines.

THE MILITANT

Published in the Interests of the Working People
March 4, 1963 Price 10c

President John Kennedy is a strikebreaker and an outright enemy of the labor movement. The latest and most glaring evidence is Kennedy's press-conference statement of February 21 in which he took the employers' side against the striking and locked-out New York City printers.

Time after time since taking office, Kennedy has backed the employers in strike situations, usually interfering under the pretext that the national health or safety was threatened. In the case of the New York newspaper strike and lockout, however, Kennedy had to admit that phony pretext does not apply.

What then is the pretext for interfering? Said Kennedy: "It is clear in the case of the New York newspaper strike that the local of the International Typographical Union and its president, Bertram Powers, are attempting to impose a settlement which could shut down several newspapers in New York . . ."

End U.S. support to Israeli terror

Before his departure for the Mideast, Secretary of State George Shultz briefed a group of U.S. Senators. He told them, "Nothing can separate the U.S. from Israel, and when Arabs — as well as the rest of the world — are convinced of this, peace negotiations between Israel and the Arabs will become a fact."

The record confirms Shultz's declaration of the insoluble links between Washington and Tel Aviv.

Israel, for example, receives far more U.S. military and economic aid than any other country.

In preparing foreign aid programs for fiscal year 1988, congressional committees cut virtually all of them. Israel's remains untouched.

It is slated to again receive \$3 billion in direct U.S. government gifts, not loans. Of this, \$1.8 billion is a program of writing-off military sales credits and \$1.2 billion in economic assistance grants. Of the total U.S. world expenditure for these two programs, Israel, with a population of 4 million, will be getting 42 percent.

Why does Israel enjoy this highly favored position?

For imperialism, the Mideast is one of the world's most vital areas. Its population constitutes a vast pool of low-paid labor. Its rich, profitable oil resources are indispensable for a number of major capitalist countries.

Militarily, the Mideast is of central importance for the imperialist powers.

The decades-long struggle by the Arab peoples for independence and self-determination is a mortal threat to imperialism.

This is where Israel comes in. The formation of the State of Israel was supported by Washington and other capitalist powers for a single reason — to use it as a beachhead against the nationalist struggle of the Arab toilers in the region.

That's why Washington arms and finances Israel, and why it backed Israel's 1967 war against its semicolonial neighbors and its 1982 aggression against Lebanon.

That's why Washington supports the repression of the Palestinian people, a people who have been subjugated by the Israelis since 1948.

The U.S. rulers' military, economic, and political support is crucial to Israel's ability to dominate the Palestinians. Without that backing, Israel could not survive.

That is why working people in this country and all par-

tisans of social progress must fight for an end to U.S. complicity with the Israeli atrocities.

The Palestinian people of the West Bank and Gaza Strip don't need Shultz' hollow offer of "limited" self-government — under continuing Israeli military rule.

- They are demanding an end to Israeli military rule.
- They want the restoration of their land — 52 percent of which has been stolen by Israeli government decree.
- They want an end to the repression. That means freedom for political prisoners. Before the current mass arrests, there were 4,000 people jailed in the West Bank alone.

- It means an end to the practice of demolishing peoples' homes as a form of "collective punishment." Since 1967 some 1,500 homes have been dynamited, bulldozed, or sealed off, leaving 10,000 people homeless.
- It means a stop to detention without trial, a stop to the beating and torture of prisoners.
- It means a halt to the deportations and the return of the 1,300 Palestinians banished from their homeland by military decree.
- It means freedom of speech, press, and assembly, now denied by the military.
- It means the rights to unionize and strike without interference.
- It means academic freedom. An end to troop attacks on Palestinian campuses and the shutdown of schools for months on end.
- It means eliminating the special permits required for Gaza and West Bank Palestinians to stay overnight in Israel, and establishing the right to unrestricted fraternal relations with the 750,000 Palestinians classified as Israeli citizens.
- It means abolition of the discriminatory identification cards and all the related abuses.
- It means political freedom — legalization of the Palestine Liberation Organization and all other political groups.

These and other necessary demands can be achieved in one way: End Israeli military rule over the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Get the troops out!

And no more U.S. guns or dollars to Israel!

The crisis of the Democrats and the 1988 elections

BY DOUG JENNESS

The Iowa and Minnesota caucuses are over, and the New Hampshire and South Dakota primaries have come and gone. "Super Tuesday" is nearly upon us.

In spite of the generally banal character of the election scramble and the media's unremitting obsession with every detail of it, there is one point that sticks out. That's

LEARNING ABOUT SOCIALISM

the crisis of the Democratic Party and the failure of any of its presidential contenders to come up with a coherent alternative to the policies of the Reagan administration. This is as true for domestic policy as it is for foreign affairs.

What makes this appear remarkable is that after the Iran-contra arms scandal hit the Reagan administration more than a year ago, one might have thought that the Democrats were a shoo-in for the White House in 1988. But the revelation of this operation and its political implications are virtually a non-issue in the campaign. Moreover, it's not predetermined at all that a Democrat will win in November.

After all the investigations, weeks of congressional hearings, and the lengthy reports that have been issued, one conclusion can be drawn. An entire secret operation was organized by the White House — that is, by President Reagan — to arm the Nicaraguan contras and conduct the mercenary war without going through Congress as prescribed by law.

This is not to say that many prominent legislators on Capitol Hill — both Democrat and Republican — didn't know what was going on. But after Congress had voted to suspend aid to the contras, the president circumvented this decision with his behind-the-scenes operation, organized through the National Security Council and the CIA.

This was a virtual coup d'etat by the government's chief executive in order to carry out a criminal war. From nearly any angle you look at it, this was an impeachable offense, and under the law the president should have been removed from office and convicted of criminal charges.

But as it stands now, only a few of those most closely involved — such as Lt. Col. Oliver North, Adm. John Poindexter, and a few lesser lights — have been fired or pressured to resign. Whether any of them will be convicted and jailed remains to be seen.

In contrast, President Richard Nixon was forced out of office under the threat of impeachment in 1974 for a lesser offense — organizing the robbery of the offices of his Democratic opponents during an election campaign and trying to cover up the operation when it began to be exposed.

But Congress — in which the Democrats hold a majority — never even considered impeaching Reagan, and in fact, now have largely dropped the Iran-contra affair.

The reason is that the political implications of Reagan's operation run deeper than Nixon's because the conduct of foreign policy is involved.

For Congress to have taken more severe measures against Reagan, it would have had to pay the price of undermining the credibility and authority of the presidency. Moreover, this would have required a fundamental difference in ruling circles over Reagan's policy in Central America, including the attempts to topple the Nicaraguan government.

There is no voice in Congress or among the presidential hopefuls that says, "The policy of intervention has failed, let's let Nicaragua live in peace," let alone anyone from these quarters saying that Nicaragua has the sovereign right to determine its own affairs and that this right should be respected.

The small margin of political difference within the government has been reflected in the recent discussion on the contra aid proposals in Congress. Most critics of Reagan's aid to the mercenaries keep trying to show that they aren't *totally* opposed to aiding the contras and keep coming up with alternative aid packages.

Washington's policy in Central America, although clearly an important question, is not one of the issues on which the Democratic (or Republican) contenders have tried to emphasize any major difference with the present course of the administration. It's not featured prominently in their campaigns at all.

The Iran-contra exposures did provoke a sharp debate over *how* the president conducts foreign policy and his concentration of more powers in the executive branch, bypassing Congress. But even this surfaced primarily because Reagan's contra operation failed.

It's interesting that this dispute, which did reveal important differences in ruling circles, and the debate over Robert Bork's nomination to the Supreme Court have not been reflected in the presidential primary races.

The absence of any substantive political debate or clear alternative political direction is what's behind the spectacle of the personal lives and foibles of the Democratic candidates dominating their election campaigns.

House Democrats push contra aid

Continued from front page

have signed cease-fires with the Nicaraguan government.

The House Democrats are trying to pass this package off as purely humanitarian, nonlethal assistance. It allegedly will buy food, clothing, shelter, and medical assistance for the mercenary troops, to be delivered by the Defense Department.

As Nicaragua's Deputy Foreign Minister Víctor Hugo Tinoco pointed out in denouncing the plan, "Any support for a force that is at war, even if it is rice and beans, is called logistical support in any language."

In hopes of suckering people into swallowing the claim that funding the war is a humanitarian act, the package includes up to \$14 million supposedly earmarked for "children's survival assistance" in the contra camps and in Nicaragua. Some House Democrats offered to appropriate even more for this purpose, in exchange for including \$1 million for replacing used-up or damaged contra military equipment.

This "save the children" gimmick is hard to beat for

cynicism. The purpose of the aid package is not to enable Nicaraguan children to survive, but to enable U.S.-organized forces to kill and maim as many more of them as possible. There is nothing humanitarian or nonlethal about the contras or the war.

On February 5 the mercenaries ambushed a civilian truck in northern Nicaragua, killing 18 passengers, including 5 infants, and wounding another 18.

Two days later, a contra threw a grenade into a crowd of demonstrators in the town of Wiwilí who were protesting the truck massacre. Nine people were killed, five of them children.

Like bullets and heat-seeking missiles, the food, clothing, shelter, and medical assistance called for in the Democrats' plan are needed to keep these killers in the field.

The Democratic plan is also designed to get the maximum number of concessions from the Nicaraguan government in the negotiations with the contras. Democrats and Republicans alike have charged that the Nicaraguan government is not living up to the accords signed by the Central American presidents last August. But it is Washington that has tried to blow up the accords.

Costa Rican Foreign Minister Rodrigo Madrigal Nieto declared February 23 that the Democrats' proposal to fund the contras "was not in essence against" the accords. This is false. The terms of the accords bar all "military, logistical, financial, and propaganda" assistance to outfits like the contras.

Instead of financing the contra war, Washington should be paying massive war reparations to aid the reconstruction of Nicaragua. The Nicaraguan people need help to rebuild farms, schools, and hospitals destroyed by the contras; resettle peasants whose homes have been demolished and whose land has become a battle zone; provide for other war refugees; and meet a wide range of basic human needs.

The latest moves in Congress to back the contra war highlight the importance of protests by the growing numbers of opponents of the war around the world.

Some important antiwar actions are planned in the United States.

On April 30 foes of the war will demonstrate in San Francisco. The event is being organized as part of building and publicizing the national marches against nuclear weapons and U.S. intervention around the world being held in New York City and on the West Coast on June 11.

In addition to organizing immediate emergency protests, antiwar fighters should go all-out to build these spring actions, demanding not one penny for the contras.



Militant/Roberto Kopeck

Amputees lead contingent of victims of contras in September march in Managua supporting government, Central America accords.

Swift meat-packers aid union drive at Armour

BY STEVE MARSHALL

Last December union meat-packers at Swift Independent's pork plant in St. Joseph, Missouri, pitched in on a union organizing drive at Armour Foods in Kansas City. The plants are 70 miles apart.

Our intention at Swift was to help out other meat-packers. Though the attempt to organize the union at Armour was narrowly defeated on December 10 by a vote of 98 to

UNION TALK

88, our solidarity work was an aid to prounion workers there. We also strengthened our union in the process.

Swift-St. Joe is a pork slaughter and boning facility. Armour is a processing plant. Both plants were closed in 1983 and reopened as nonunion operations. The Swift meat-packers were able to reorganize the union. Both plants are now controlled by ConAgra, the nation's second-largest packing company.

Swift workers are members of Local P-58 of the United Food and Commercial Workers union (UFCW). Armour workers would have been members of our local if the organizing drive had succeeded.

Ten days before the Armour union-representation election, workers at Swift got hold of some of the antiunion flyers the company was passing out in Kansas City.

Especially insulting was a cartoon drawing of three hulking white goons — labeled "UFCW Local P-58" — threatening a Black Armour worker.

Over lunch tables and in the hallways, we debated how to answer Armour's slander against our union.

We drafted a letter to the Armour workers inviting them to "join us in the union." We described wage increases we'd won and said that the union "provides us with a means of fighting" for decent working conditions and dignity on the job.

Eight or nine workers, led by two shop stewards, gathered 160 signatures on the letter in a couple of days. The local president arranged for four of us to get time off from work to travel to Kansas City.

We met up with UFCW staff members and Armour workers who were involved in the union organizing drive. We spent several hours at the plant gate passing out the Swift letter and talking about our common fight against the packinghouse bosses.

The decision to involve ourselves in the Armour drive prompted some important thinking among workers at Swift.

First was the question of what a union is and why workers need one. Is the union something that workers "hire," like a law firm or an advertising agency, as Armour claimed? Is it well-paid officials in an office? Is it a dozen stewards in a plant?

Several Swift workers at first refused to sign the letter.

One guy told me, "This union is worthless." But I argued that the workers at Armour had two choices in the election: our union, or no union.

A few minutes later that same guy found me in the locker room. "Give me that thing," he said. As he signed it, he described how weak our union is, but also how much more miserable it would be at Swift without a union. He also said that we're the only ones who can change the union.

Other Swift workers agreed. "The union is us," they said. It's our organization, which we must use to defend ourselves against employer attacks.

We also began discussing the importance of solidarity. This included not only talking about the Armour organizing drive but also the struggles by meat-packers at IBP and John Morrell packinghouses in the Midwest over the past year. A few discussions expanded the concept of solidarity to include other U.S. workers as well as working people in other countries.

The discussion at Swift helped make our union a little bit more democratic. We saw better how democracy is not only discussing what needs to be done, but also acting on it through the structures of the union. Workers at Swift are a little more confident now about our ability to decide the union's course.

Steve Marshall bones hams at the Swift plant and is a member of UFCW Local P-58.

LETTERS

Entitlement programs

Guess who said, "We have to deal with needs, not wants. That means you've got to start paring down on some of these entitlement programs because they are not all related to needs..." That's what the Democrats should all be saying, even with respect to Social Security."

It was our governor, Mario Cuomo who, according to the *Washington Post*, stated the above in an interview about the fight to lower the federal deficit.

The governor is saying that like welfare programs, Social Security should be means-tested. This reflects a growing tendency among many to beat Social Security over the head.

This from a man who many Democrats think will be our savior and want to draft to run as president at the Democratic convention.

The deficit was not created by Social Security, but from the increase in military spending. One-half of those now receiving these benefits would be impoverished if they were cut.

Yet because most rank-and-file workers are kept from knowing about this man's statement, they would vote for him. They are under the assumption that he is a liberal and caring person.

Thankfully, my union — American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees District Council 37, Local 371 — let us in on Cuomo's little secret, and we have already organized the Retirees Association to fight him on this issue.

M. Shur

Retiree

Brooklyn, New York

Don't stop

The struggle for socialism in the United States is not exactly at the barricade stage yet, but your paper plays a key role in guiding our struggle in the plant here.

Not that others read it, but it gives me the full understanding I need to concretize our demands, and beat the bureaucracy and the company without unnecessary dangers.

Anyway, you know what you're doing, and don't stop for anything.

J.E.

Forest Park, Illinois

East Timor

Thanks for the article "Indonesia's rulers step up genocidal war in East Timor" in the January 22 *Militant*.

East Timor is probably the most forgotten and most tragic struggle

taking place today. As Erling Sannes makes clear, a third of East Timor's population has been killed by Indonesian imperialism.

The state of siege under which East Timor is kept and the collusion of Western governments in keeping a gag on events in East Timor mean that the East Timorese have not received the same solidarity shown by workers to other liberation struggles.

It is time East Timor's plight was brought out into the open to stand alongside the struggles being led by the African National Congress of South Africa or the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front of El Salvador.

Thank you also for the articles on Burkina Faso. I hope that the *Militant* will continue to inform us about the fight against the counter-revolution.

I also feel that a book recording the advances made by Burkina Faso under Thomas Sankara's leadership would be useful to record the truth about the revolution, a record that the new regime seeks to poison.

Alexander Fitch

Kent, England

Inflation

American policy toward Nicaragua during the Reagan years has been a complete success in devastating that country's economy. Inflation ran at 1,800 percent in 1987. Economists say in 1988 it will hit 13,000 percent.

Inflation is also high in this country. Nicaraguan defector Róger Miranda was paid \$800,000 by the U.S. government for services that formerly cost 30 pieces of silver.

Ronald Wicknick

Miami Beach, Florida

Afghanistan

Fred Feldman's article in the January 29 *Militant* on the possible pullout of Soviet troops from Afghanistan has raised several questions.

If the Soviet Union has changed only marginally in terms of reforming Stalinist domestic policies, they have, since the death of Stalin, certainly become much more internationalist with regard to supporting liberation movements abroad.

Despite their frequent heavy-handedness, haven't they received too little credit on this score?

Afghanistan parallels Vietnam in that the American people had pretty much the same reaction to their army's ineffectiveness as do the Soviet people today with re-

spect to Afghanistan.

Jeff Chern

Plano, Texas

Aid for Nicaragua

At 5:40 a.m. February 1 a pickup truck pulled out of Cleveland bound for Bluefields, a town in the Atlantic Coast region of Nicaragua. It was loaded with more than \$10,000 worth of medicines, in addition to medical supplies such as an electrocardiogram machine, a sterilizer, and an examination table.

The truck also contained electrical supplies to complete the electrification of Rama Cay, a small island near Bluefields inhabited by several hundred Rama Indians. The electrification project is under the direction of Nicaragua's Atlantic Coast Autonomy Commission.

Project organizer Linda Mast spearheaded Cleveland's Quest for Peace collection of \$100,000 worth of supplies and equipment delivered last year. She estimates that current cash contributions and other donations total \$20,000.

The other organizer of the trip is Ike Downs, a native of the Atlantic Coast currently living in Cleveland.

Mast; Downs; Gary Edmond, a student at Cleveland State University; and a woman factory worker from Cleveland make up the crew driving through Mexico, Guatemala, and Honduras on the projected six-day trip to Nicaragua.

Marty Pettit

Cleveland, Ohio

Olof Palme

On Feb. 28, 1986, Olof Palme, the Social Democratic prime minister of Sweden, was shot to death on the streets of Stockholm.

Palme had been a vigorous opponent of the U.S. war in Vietnam and NATO's war preparations in Europe. He had vowed to increase Sweden's aid to the Nicaraguan revolution in response to Reagan's attempt to destroy it.

Shortly before he was murdered, he had ordered an investigation of Bofors, a Swedish company linked to Reagan's Iranian arms deal, and through that investigation, had become aware of the contra connection.

Soberanía, a bilingual magazine published in Managua, did an investigation of this murder and published an article in its April issue that pointed the finger at a special unit of the CIA, although no claim of definitive proof was made.

This seems like an important



Engelhardt

"You just can't trust Ortega!"

story that I don't recall being covered in the *Militant*.

M.B.

Albuquerque, New Mexico

Nature of the poison

Upon my release from prison, it is my intention to put to work everything I have learned over the years on the political works of Marxism, including Marx's scientific approach to making the world a better place to live for all of us.

I see how important it is to keep up to date on world struggles and the more troubled spots that suffer the cruel conflict imposed by the terrible poison of capitalism.

A good soldier is capable only once he or she is learned and made aware of the nature of the poison he or she fights.

A prisoner

Tucson, Arizona

Broader spectrum

I find the *Militant* very informative concerning the world's economic and political affairs. However, I believe if your newspaper

branches out on a broader spectrum instead of just a select few (Nicaragua, Iran, Israel, Russia, etc.), you would find more readers showing interest.

A prisoner

Auburn, New York

Correction

The article "Maine paper strikers receive report from Nicaragua trip" in the last issue of the *Militant* mentions two messages sent to the Jay, Maine, strikers from the Sandinista Workers Federation (CST) and the Rural Workers Association (ATC). The messages were from two regional leaders of the CST and ATC in Estelí, Nicaragua, not from the national organizations.

The letters column is an open forum for all viewpoints on subjects of general interest to our readers. Please keep your letters brief. Where necessary they will be abridged. Please indicate if you prefer that your initials be used rather than your full name.

S. Africa war on Angola heats up

BY SAM MANUEL

At least seven South African soldiers have been killed in Angola since February 13. This brings to 48 the official number of soldiers reported by South African authorities to have died in Angola since the apartheid regime's troops invaded last October.

Angolan President José Eduardo dos Santos reported, however, that 140 South African soldiers have been killed in that time period and that six South African planes and 47 tanks and armored vehicles have been destroyed.

The seven most recent South African casualties include four 19-year-old white soldiers, who were killed when their armored vehicle was hit by Angolan artillery shells. One week later, the South African military announced that three more soldiers had been killed and one of its aircraft shot down. The pilot was reported missing.

The seven were killed near the town of Cuito Cuanavale in the southeastern province of Cuando Cubango.

On January 13 a combined force of South African troops and units of the Angolan counterrevolutionary National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA), estimated at 6,000, attacked Angolan military forces at Cuito Cuanavale. Some 160 Cuban internationalist troops are also based there. South African artillery bombarded the town with an average of 170 to 200 shells per day. Up to 6,500 civilian men, women, and children had to be evacuated from the area.

The current battle in Cuito Cuanavale is a continuation of the fighting that began in the southeastern part of Angola with the October 1987 invasion by an estimated 3,000 South African soldiers. Their goal

was to prevent the defeat of UNITA by Angolan troops, which had launched an offensive against one of UNITA's bases in Mavinga.

The battle for Cuito Cuanavale is extremely important. This town is the front-line base from which Angolan troops carry out their operations against UNITA and South African strongholds in Cuando Cubango.

UNITA has received substantial support from the U.S. government. The CIA has acknowledged giving the counterrevolutionary outfit \$15 million a year in military hardware for the past two years.

South African and UNITA military leaders have denied South African involvement in the fighting. They said that South African troops withdrew from Angola in mid-December last year. The admission that seven of their soldiers were killed refutes this claim.

In confirming the deaths of four of the soldiers, South African Defense Commander Gen. Jannie Geldenhuys said that the withdrawal of his troops from Angola has been "slower than anticipated."

On January 27 the Angola Defense Ministry announced that its forces had halted the South African advance in Cuito Cuanavale. The statement also said that Angolan troops had retaken the mountain position 20 kilometers to the south from which the South Africans were bombarding the town.

Angolan success in holding Cuito Cuanavale was confirmed the following day in a television broadcast. Angolan Major Domingo Baptista reported that initially his troops had been forced to with-



South African troops in Angola. Major invasion by apartheid regime that began last October has gone virtually unreported by big-business media.

draw from some of their positions following earlier heavy fighting. Subsequently, however, planes piloted by Angolans and Cubans pounded South African forces, reversing their advance, and allowing the Angolan army to reestablish its positions.

South African bombing raids

Meanwhile, over the February 20 weekend South African planes carried out bombing strikes against alleged camps of the South West Africa People's Organisa-

tion in neighboring Namibia. SWAPO is the leading organization fighting against South Africa's illegal occupation of Namibia.

South African military officials have said that the air strikes were in retaliation for the bombing of a bank near a South African military base in Oshakati, Namibia. The number of people killed from the blast has risen to 20. Most of them are Blacks. Many others remain critically injured.

SWAPO Information Secretary Hidipo Hamutenya denied that his group had anything to do with the bombing. South Africa's accusation is part of its "dirty propaganda campaign to smear the name of SWAPO," Hamutenya said.

Major Fernando Amandio Mateus, deputy commander of Angola's sixth military region, said that one of the South African battalions operating against Cuito Cuanavale consisted mainly of Black Namibian troops. Thousands of Blacks from South African-ruled Namibia are forced into military service.

The apartheid regime traditionally has explained its incursions into Angola by saying that its troops were pursuing guerrillas from SWAPO or the African National Congress of South Africa. With the latest invasion, the South African government has openly declared its troops are fighting with UNITA against Angola.

South African Prime Minister Pieter Botha and several of his government ministers flew into Cuando Cubango to shore up

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5-month Wyoming coal strike holds firm

BY SCOTT BREEN

SHERIDAN, Wyo. — After five months on the picket line in strikes against Decker Coal and Big Horn Coal, miners are still refusing to buckle.

Negotiations between the United Mine Workers union and the two coal companies — both of which are owned by Peter Kiewit & Sons — remain stalemated. The Decker mine is north of here across the Montana border. Big Horn is near here in Wyoming.

At February 11-12 negotiating sessions, mine workers union representatives presented four separate proposals to Kiewit. Modeled after the recently approved national contract the union signed with the Bituminous Coal Operators Association, the proposals call for miners laid off at Decker or Big Horn to get three out of five new jobs at Kiewit's four mining operations or at any operations the company may open in the future.

Both negotiating sessions lasted 15 minutes, with the company rejecting the union's proposals. Kiewit's chief negotiator, Gary Houston, said the plans would be a "substantial interference with the hiring process."

A week earlier the company had rejected a proposal by Wyoming Gov. Michael Sullivan to have the strikers go back to work under the terms of the contract that expired last October.

The National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) is expected to rule on the status of the 200 scabs the company has hired since the beginning of the strike. Kiewit contends that the scabs are "permanent" employees.

Also pending before the NLRB are unfair labor practice charges the union filed after Kiewit refused to provide it with information about a pension plan the company was supposed to establish after signing a 1986 contract.

The State of Montana has already ruled that Kiewit violated labor law by not providing the union with that information. As

a result, the state granted the strikers unemployment compensation, which supplements the selective strike benefits the strikers receive from the union.

Court order against picketing

Regardless of which way the NLRB rules, the miners are bracing for a long fight. "The charges aren't going to resolve this conflict," UMWA Local 1972 spokesman Whitey Wells explained.

On February 8 Wyoming District Judge James Wolfe served individual restraining orders on 240 strikers. The court order forbids them from picketing the homes of scabs or company stockholders. The strikers are also forbidden from cursing scabs or escorting them to and from their homes in the Sheridan area.

After listening to hours of testimony from company lawyers, Wolfe branded the UMWA's activities as "terrorist."

Union members were outraged, though not surprised, by the judge's ruling.

Speaking before 250 strikers and their supporters at a February 13 union meeting, Local 1972 President Larry Deeds said that at the hearing where the injunction was issued, "The company lawyers never presented a single shred of evidence of criminal or illegal acts," by union members.

Union spokesperson Wells emphasized, "The judge can issue all the orders he wants; the strike will continue."

At the meeting, union leaders also described the financial impact the strike is having on Kiewit. The company spent more than \$56,000 in December busing scabs in and out of the mines. Kiewit has paid out more than \$500,000 to the three strike-breaking outfits it has hired.

"In three months, Kiewit has paid more to break the union than they would have if they'd settled the strike," Local 1972 Vice-president Tom Rice explained.

High stakes

This is a large coal-producing area. There are 10 nonunion mines in the Powder

River Basin near Gillette, Wyoming. These include six of the largest U.S. coal-producing mines.

"Looking at the small picture," Whitey Wells stressed, "it's us against Decker Coal. Looking at the big picture, I believe that it's us against nonunion coal in the West."

"If Kiewit is allowed to get its way here, I believe that workers throughout this region will suffer the consequences for years," Wells continued. On the other hand, he said, "If we win this struggle here, it will only be a matter of time before those coal mines are union."

The union has tentatively set March 12 as the date for a solidarity rally to be held here in Sheridan. Messages of solidarity and donations can be sent to UMWA Local 1972, P.O. Box 66, Sheridan, Wyo. 82801.

1,000 protest racist murder of Dominican worker by N.Y. cops

BY KEVIN KELLOGG

NEW YORK — More than 1,000 people, many with fists raised, marched silently past the home of Juan Rodríguez February 20, in a powerful protest against the latest incident of racist cop murder in this city.

Rodríguez, a 40-year-old Dominican worker and father of three children, was brutally beaten to death in his Brooklyn apartment by four cops on January 30.

The cops claim that Rodríguez died from a heart attack. An independent autopsy, however, revealed that he was savagely beaten about the head, face, and chest, and that his hands and legs had been battered — all while he was handcuffed.

The demonstration, largely made up of community residents, was called by the Latino Coalition for Racial Justice, an organization that includes Latino, Black, and

civil rights groups formed to demand prosecution of killer cops.

The demonstration more than doubled in size as hundreds of people lining the streets of the predominantly Latino neighborhood joined the march.

The protesters demanded the arrest of the four cops involved, and called on New York Mayor Edward Koch to make a statement on the case.

Chanting "Si no hay justicia, no hay paz," (No justice, no peace) and "The police are criminals, jail them," the protest wound through Brooklyn for two and a half hours. Finally, the police blocked the streets, forcing the protesters to disperse.

Brooklyn District Attorney Elizabeth Holtzman announced February 19 that a grand jury has been convened to investigate the case.